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SHALL WE DO WITHOUT JESUS?

BY

ARTHUR C. HILL

MINISTER OF NEW COURT CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

HODDER AND STOUGHTON

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"If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity awhile,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story."

SHAKESPEARE.

PREFACE

JESUS once told the story of a successful man. At the end of the tragic tale Jesus fixes upon him the one epithet a man resents. He describes him as a Fool.

Why did Jesus speak of an industrious and provident person in these contemptuous terms? Was the man mentally defective? Was he morally corrupt? Not so. This man *did not understand life*. He failed in the calculation of values.

The teacher who speaks thus needs to be sure of himself. Did Jesus understand life's meaning? Unquestionably He believed that He knew. He maintained that belief to the end.

Some of us are now asking whether He was right. For suppose that Jesus spoke out of a folly deeper than that of the Fool? Then all those whom He has misled with His dreams will help to heap the clods upon His grave. But, what if He were right? Then His words bind us more firmly than gyves of steel.

To those who are asking whether Jesus can interpret the meaning of life, I dedicate this book.

A. C. HILL.

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PART I.—SPECTACULAR

CHAPTER I

JESUS AND THE EXISTING SITUATION

CAN we do without Jesus Christ? The questions which now trouble thoughtful men are leading finally to this. Is there a future for the teaching of Jesus? Has the influence of that impressive figure reached its ultimate limit?

There is no need to prove that Jesus has had a vast share in the making of history. Few men would deny that on the whole that influence has been for good. The bitterest anti-Christian must confess that to eliminate the power for so many centuries connected with the name of Jesus would make the human story inexplicable. But many of our contemporaries seriously maintain that the day of revealed religion is past. They believe that the Churches have done their work. In their judgment the direction of the world's future will be in the hands of those who deny the authority of Jesus. He has been worshipped and followed, however imperfectly, through sixty generations of human progress. But the star of His glory has begun to decline. We know the Greeks to have frequently discussed the decline of religion. The phenomenon is not new. But the question is now, whether a specific cult can continue to live. Can our belief in Jesus resist the attacks which are made upon it from every quarter?

The problem is complicated by the different opinions held by Christian men. Their divisions are considerable and persistent. Any man might be pardoned for repeating Mercutio's bitter phrase, "A plague o' both your houses." Consider the ancient divisions into Rome, Geneva and Canterbury. These alone give one such an impression of internecine conflict, of animosities poorly concealed, and outrageous claims trumpeted in the ear of the world, that many a man will go no further in his investigations. He will leave the priest to settle his dispute with the presbyter, and himself attend to matters more pressing and important.

Let a man look at the differences which divide smaller and more recent bodies of Christians. He will feel justified in his disdain for a body of persons who proclaim peace to the world, yet cannot settle the first principles on which they are themselves agreed.

And which of us will blame him for this impatience? The antagonism between the various forms of the Roman faith is as bitter now as it was in the old days of Jansenism and Jesuitism. The breach between Doukhobor or Stundist and the orthodox Russian is intense as ever. Even between the Anglican and Free Churches of England, the ancient hostilities show little signs of assuagement. Yet the situation which now confronts all believing Christians is almost without precedent in history.

A wise man once told Disraeli that the House of Commons would not confess any man to be an orator unless they had the credit of finding it out. It is a jealous assembly. Something of that spirit is discernible in the world of our time. Men are not eager to give credit anywhere, and least of all to religion. For in the nature of things religion must speak with a measure of authority. Its majesty, indeed, is not external. It is

not vested in priest or system. But the authority of its appeal to the conscience of man, the claim which it makes for obedience to the moral judgment, the reverence which it demands for God, these are all antipathetic to the mood predominant in our time.

Besides this, there is a constitutional unwillingness on the part of many men to acknowledge the mysterious. They feel that Spencer's naïve confession, that he had no lines on his forehead because he was never puzzled, ought to be true for them. The presence of a religion which, whether it gives an answer or not, certainly raises the questions that lie at the roots of life, moves them to inarticulate but genuine wrath.

On the Continent the position is disquieting. It may well give pause to the daring spirits who look for a speedy conversion of the world. The German lands are not manifesting any increased attachment to the faith of Luther. A strong feeling exists that one of the reactionary forces in the Empire is the body of opinion brought into being by the genius of the Reformer. Some of them feel with Goethe that the world would have been better without a Luther. Secessions from the Church may be accounted for by many reasons, some of them purely political. But the fact is indisputable, that its ancient religion has no such grip upon the community as it possessed in days when the German nation was fighting for its life against Napoleon.

French opinion on the matter of the Christian faith seems to be even less satisfactory. The belief that religious education has had something to do with historic military disasters is not without effect on national life. Those tragic consequences which proceeded from interference by the Empress Eugenie, backed by the Catholic hierarchy, in the political affairs of the nation have

produced bitter fruit. One result is the repudiation of the Church as an educative agency. All the facts indicate rebellion against the recognised embodiments of Christian faith and teaching.

If ever it was a case of "Christians against the world," it is surely now that we find the completest expression of that stern conflict. The Christian must again recognise that he is a soldier, holding the frontier against the foe.

Then there are many amongst us who may be fitly described as entirely ignorant of Christianity, although they have no feelings of enmity against it. The growth of large towns, the introduction of our young people into employments where they earn high wages, with the consequence that they are economically independent, these things have produced a condition of affairs with which the Church has found it difficult to cope. There is a vast amount of practical Paganism in our midst. Its chief product is a distaste for that restrained and balanced life which is the fruit of Christian teaching.

These are considerations which must make the Christian believer pause. Sir Frederick Treves says that one of the triumphs of Christianity is that it should continue to live amidst the corruptions of modern Jerusalem. But the battle which has yet to be waged in defence of the faith will be sterner than any fought in the Holy City. For it will be fought against those who openly deride and deny our first principles.

One thing is requisite for the Christian man to-day. He must freely acknowledge the fact that the world is not Christian. He must confess that, in any deep sense of the term, it never has been.

There are features in the life of the Medieval world that have for many of us a powerful attraction. We

have escaped from the prejudice, too long existing, which has been content to describe that period of history as the Dark Ages. We no longer regard the people of that era as necessarily living in a besotted ignorance. That deplorable misery, mitigated by neither Church nor State, which has been attributed to the people of that time, exists chiefly in the imagination of angry scientists.

The fact is that many men, dissatisfied with the present condition of affairs, have turned to that period with relief. They believe that they can find there elements more important to the full-orbed life of humanity than some of those most salient in our own time. It seems to them possible that there was then a more widely diffused happiness, a greater measure of sheer joy, in the existence of the average man, than is granted to the same class to-day. Enjoying the full harvest of what the sciences have produced for us, we may have sacrificed possessions which are at least as valuable.

Yet there is one fact that vitiates all these efforts to colour the past with a golden glow. The measure of happiness then possessed by men was the result of a combination of temporal with spiritual power, which can hardly be repeated in the history of the world, and is very unlikely to be duplicated in the future developments of the European mind. For good or ill, the claim of the average man to manage his own affairs has been enforced beyond the reach of dispute. And religion can never again hope to support itself, either by the thunders of an excommunication which calls in the terrors of the next world to frighten the souls of the rebellious, or by the use of pike and fagot to compel the recalcitrant to submit to an authority that the intellect refuses to acknowledge.

And who is there in whom the fire of faith burns,

however feebly, who would purchase again the prestige of a Boniface or a Richelieu at such a price as was paid for it by these dubious defenders of the great tradition ?

Must we not indeed confess, though not without regret, that even this so-called Christian civilisation of the Middle Ages was not really Christian after all ? An allegiance based upon fear, a peace produced by making a wilderness of the other parts of human life, can never answer to the type of religion and to the formula of life that Jesus brought into the world. If Christianity could only live through having as its concomitants such mental privations and limitations of liberty as were enforced under the despotic rule of the Papacy, it would come as a curse rather than a benefaction to men.

With equal resolution we must make the confession that the world is not, in any true sense, Christian at the present time. The notion that there is any State in the world which conducts its affairs on strictly Christian lines must be banished as one of the false imaginings with which we have hidden the truth from our eyes. There are many to whom this is the veriest platitude. But there are some, and those often the best men and women of the time, who still believe that, in the high policy of nations, there can be found the expression of the Christian evangel. Still, even those of us who cherish the hope that the affairs of nations may yet be conducted on the lines of Christian ethics, must admit that hitherto the examples of Christian conduct in international affairs are few and insignificant. We must learn anew how to condemn Napoleon's massacre of the prisoners at Jaffa in the name of military expediency. The partition of Poland and the cruelties perpetrated amongst that sorrowful people by the Russians cannot be justified by Christian ethics. That war to the death which Bismarck waged against France, when the Germans encircled

Paris, may have been politically expedient, but was morally indefensible. These things compel us to acknowledge that no nation has hitherto perfectly illustrated the principles of the Christian Gospel. Our own story of prisoners blown from the guns in India is not pleasant reading. The history of South Africa can hardly be cited as an example of the way brethren dwell together in unity. Ireland is still a bleeding wound in the side of a world Empire. And now this sad old tale is being recited again. Italy is claiming her share of the spoil by annexing Tripoli, and the nations are waiting for the dismemberment of Turkey that they may each demand a portion of their ancient enemy's carcase. In the high politics of the world where shall we look for illustrations of Christian conduct? Too many of us have fallen into the mental attitude of the ancient peoples. We have placed our golden age of the faith in former centuries. Not only have we believed in an age when the Cross was erected upon the central buildings of populous cities and accepted by the leaders of nations as their chosen emblem, we have imagined that in such times it really represented the spirit of the statesman and could be accepted as an image of the life of mighty peoples. We may still think with pride of the splendid history that lies behind us. But we must realise that these things are but the preluding waves of that billowing tide of victory which is to come upon men in future centuries.

If, however, those conquests of the spirit are ever to be achieved, it must be asked: Under whose guidance are we to go forward? What leader have we? Where is the ruler who can bring us within sight of a kingdom where the reverence of the soul for God is respected as the groundwork of national grandeur? Who will lead us to a land where justice is uncontaminated by the usurer and mightier than the gauntleted oppressor? Can humanity ever find a home where the grace that

hung around the pagan lands is mingled with the stern beauty which gathers round Zion's hill? And to this question we answer that, if ever men are to enter that land of their dreams and desires, it must be under the leadership of Jesus the Nazarene.

CHAPTER II

JESUS AND THE WORLD'S RIDICULE

A DISTINGUISHED French general on one occasion was reviewing troops in the presence of a vast concourse of his compatriots. His horse shied, bolted, and threw the rider ignominiously over his head. The assembled populace decided that this was a good joke, and laughed at the unfortunate soldier. The consequences of the accident were a few trifling bruises, the hilarity of the onlookers, and the permanent retirement of the soldier from public life. It appears that in France you may have your neck broken and still remain a respectable figure. But you must not be laughed at, though it be through an accident that might happen to a jockey. For after that there is no further place for you in the public life of that light-hearted nation.

The Christian religion is suffering at present from a long-continued course of the treatment meted out to the unfortunate French soldier. It has been laughed at for many years, and some of its defenders have developed a wholesome fear of being made to look ridiculous. They would probably find courage enough to serve them well if Smithfield fires ever came again into fashion. But before the derisive finger of scorn they shrink like hot-house roses in an Arctic blast.

One reason for this may be our superior development of sensibility, the natural consequence of our advancing culture. Men are sensitive to the movements of the

time. They have learned to appreciate the pleasure of a conscious unity with the more progressive sections of humanity. And they cannot be entirely indifferent to the opinion of their contemporaries. This is one of the inevitable consequences of a highly complicated social order. We all live more or less in the presence of our neighbours. Naturally, we like to speak freely on the matters that interest us, and we feel more keenly than ever the sense of social disapproval. The Athenians were probably the most intensely social of all ancient peoples. They lived much in the open air, were in the habit of hearing all things discussed under the light of their blue skies, and were extremely sensitive to ridicule. Their powers of satire were exercised without mercy upon all the varied forms of thought and speech that came before them. It was in strict keeping with their character that the Gospel should appear to them as a compendium of barbarous and delusive notions. One of the most heroic efforts made by the courageous St. Paul was his endeavour to bring the truth and beauty of the Gospel home to the men and women who had learned to laugh at the wit of Aristophanes. Of those convictions which are born of solitary meditation, which have been strengthened by deep introspective studies until they burn with a clear flame in the soul, such people would have little comprehension. They would be amused by one who had followed in the steps of the Baptist and had heard the Divine voice speaking in the secret places of the wilderness. With what amazement would they contemplate the vanity of an individual who set up his private judgment against the accepted opinion of the masses of mankind! They would laugh him out of court as one who has not learned his own insignificance, and would go gaily on their way rejoicing in having silenced another impostor. Great as are the advantages of social life, and necessary as it is to the development of

the richer forms of humanity, it is not in such communities that the prophetic spirit is born. It is in the silences that the forces of the soul are welded. The mighty convictions which may change the face of a civilisation and mark the beginning of a new era in history, are born in secret. Columbus would have fainted long before the completion of his enterprise had he not nourished his mind in solitude. There he learned how to defend himself against the rusting influences which proceed from the scorn of men. And whoever would possess himself of fortitude must learn to live his inner life alone, however necessary it may be for his outer life to be made up of communal intercourse with his fellow-men.

It is clear that many of us are suffering from the weakness produced by this excessive veneration for the opinions of the society in which we live. There is said, by many acute observers, to be a lamentable absence of original characters in our present social order. Those clearly formed and positive conceptions of life and duty which once were not uncommon amongst us are now seldom seen. That was an unbeautiful idea of life which led Nelson to say that the mark of the true Englishman was that he should hate a Frenchman like the devil. But out of the positive thought of which that was an unlovely excrescence was born the fierce passion that carried him through Aboukir, and led him at last to the glories of Trafalgar.

No one would plead for a foolish disregard of unimportant conventions. It is stupid to make the wearing of a particular kind of dress, or the use of a certain form of diet, into something not less important than religion. When good men make of these incidentals of existence the subjects of their deepest thought, and exercise upon the observance of such petty rules their uttermost powers of will, they deserve to be uncomprisingly laughed out of the society of intelligent men. What such people are

suffering from is not a loss of moral fibre. They lack the perceptions which would enable them to discriminate between the trivial and the significant elements in life. Whether a man eats beef or beans, smokes tobacco and drinks coffee, or prefers to live on tomatoes and brown bread, is of no more importance to the world than his choice of laced or gusseted boots for foot wear. Sensible men will always prefer to do in these things what the majority of their contemporaries do. By so acting they are enabled to dismiss the whole subject from their mind and pay attention to things that really matter.

It is in relation to these more important things that the forces of the higher man within us may be called into play. Here we may well learn how to express our individual judgment. And in these matters it may often be necessary to brace ourselves to meet that opprobrium and ridicule of which we all have such a healthy dread. For this is the smallest fragment of that cross which, according to the Master, is to be borne by every one who undertakes to follow Him. We ought not to expect that the Christian faith will ever be entirely adaptable to the mind of any generation. There will always be some discord between it and the world. And no sacrifice of truth on our part or of kindly tolerance on the part of the world can entirely dissipate it. Men will always feel that to have made those mental affirmations which belong to the Christian creed, must give to the believer a new outlook upon the world's life. His view of life must be other than that of the utterly indifferent or irreligious man. And they will probably test our courage and fidelity by putting our beliefs under the fire of their ridicule.

But it should be remembered that the men who are most keenly intent upon subjecting us to this critical ordeal, are the most likely to value our capacity to stand their fire without blenching. The magnificent service

rendered to the cause of Religion by the Founder of the Salvation Army has long since been recognised by all classes. But perhaps the real worth of his work will yet prove to lie in the courage he displayed when confronting the scorn of outraged burgesses with the wild fervour of regenerated men. The moral of his work surely is that there is nothing the Christian believer should count so lightly as the contempt and sarcasms of his contemporaries. It ought to be as much part of his day's work to meet this, as it is part of a soldier's duty to keep his buttons clean.

Huxley has told us that there is nothing men dislike so much as being compelled to alter their convictions. And the function of the Christian believer is essentially that of compelling men to change or modify nearly all their accepted prejudgments as to the nature and purpose of life. Only one who is armed with the triple brass of a genuine faith in the importance of his work can resist the disposition to indolence, the acceptance of the conventional as the real, which will be foisted upon him by the people of his time.

It is here that we need the authority of the Divine Man. Left to our own devices, with no high personage to stir us to a nobler judgment, we may sink into a condition of mutual fear. Freedom of thought and spontaneity of utterance may thus be banished from the world more speedily than by the edict of a Napoleon or the efforts of a Russian bureaucracy. Or else we shall waste the qualities of mind and heart which ought to produce high and original conduct upon the trivialities of existence. Then we shall transform human beings into intelligent peacocks. The reign of the faddist is already far too widely extended. His authority has even now in some parts of the world elevated into first-class sins, actions which a more rational age would have regarded as belonging to the region of purely personal taste.

Agitations for the revival of knee-breeches, serious efforts to extend the war against the wearing of hats, endeavours to induce modest men to wear heliotrope dress coats, all go to show that we are in danger of squandering our treasure of moral energy upon matters which ought not to trouble any one with more brain than a rabbit. If we wish to get back to a healthy state of mind, we must find something of importance with which to occupy our intellectual and ethical forces.

We must not allow the minor graces to oust the commanding virtues of the human spirit. To be courteous and kindly towards men is good. But in maintaining this relationship towards our contemporaries we need not sacrifice our deepest convictions. It is reasonable to accept the unimportant conventions of our society and time. To pay afternoon calls, to return hospitality that we have received, is incumbent upon all. But these things are not more than the small change of life. We ought not to make them the capital sum of existence. There are beliefs which ought to exercise rulership over our lives. They must not be suffered to sink into the background of thought. To allow them to be submerged and forgotten is to condemn ourselves as incompetent in the art of vital valuation. It is written that there was once a lighthouse keeper far too generous to allow his neighbours to suffer for lack of oil. They found themselves deficient in that commodity. Cheerfully he distributed amongst them what was intended to feed the great lamp. How would he excuse himself when the ship came tearing and grinding on the rocks? What could he say to poor wretches praying for deliverance from imminent death? Would his kindness justify his treason? The widows of the dead sailors would know better. Geniality is not morality. Cheerfulness is an element of religion, but it is not religion. When shall we forget that Carlyle had an irritable temper and

remember that he wrote *Past and Present*? The peddling virtues of small minds are no fit substitutes for heroic beliefs. For these lift the soul to high altitudes. They help a feeble man to compass life and death in the sweeping vision of the saint.

We need Jesus that He may once more teach us the elements of common sense.

When Shaftesbury asserted that ridicule was a test of truth, he was making a mistake of which many less gifted have been guilty. It would be a poor prospect for the truth-seeker if the crackling laughter of the fool were to prove more effective than his life-long labours in the laboratory or the study. But that ridicule is a test of the truth holder is an indisputable proposition. Napoleon carried the Golden Cross through the streets of Paris in a closed carriage. By so doing he revealed to the world that the conqueror of Marengo had a dread of the derision of the mob which would have been scornfully repudiated by Beau Brummel or George Fox. That is the fear we need to put under our feet. Truth may not be dependent upon our poor judgments. But the preservation of our own self-respect, above all, the maintenance of our loyalty to Jesus, demands that we should offer a smiling face and a dauntless purpose to those who would jeer us out of our beliefs.

And we sorely need the great example of our Master to teach us how to confront the contempt and ridicule of the world. To conform in all things not important to the opinions of our fellows is good. But to be non-conformists of the spirit whenever our faith is called in question by the general voice, is the high task to which we have been elected and ordained.

CHAPTER III

JESUS AND WORLD WEARINESS

SUICIDE is said to be on the increase. It is true that statistics tell lies more fluently than a modern Greek. But it is probable that their testimony to this effect is true. Nor should we delude ourselves by imagining that this shows an increase in courage. We have not adopted the stoical indifference to pain characteristic of the Oriental. It is not a chivalrous sentiment of honour that impels us men along this path. The Happy Dispatch may have its home in Japan. It has not yet become indigenous in Europe.

It is not now in the joyous mood of contempt for life that we leave the stage on which we have played our little part. There was something almost magnificent in the effrontery with which a Rabelais, as he confronted the eternal mystery, could say—"Let down the curtain; the farce is done." And that epitaph on the tomb of Gay, which tells us that "life's a jest," is like a cheerful challenge of defiance to the Powers that rule the world. It is as if he would ask them why a man should treat this trifling gift of life as if it had any intrinsic importance.

How differently we view the world to-day. The disgust with it all is there still. But gone is the courage that led men to make their great denials with a smile upon their lips. Vanished is the bravado which led them to comment upon their own mortality, as an aristocrat of

the Revolution might sneer at the filthy crowd of ruffians who polluted the air with the effluvia of their presence. This high-toned contempt for life, which had at least a certain redeeming grace, has departed. In its place there reigns a cowardice which shrinks from the hardness of existence and goes cravenly to the embraces of death.

It was a bitter and deeply false saying of Renan's, that well-fed domestic cat who purred out his delicate scepticism by the side of the warm fires of life, and in sight of the milk bowl, that the age of immorality was to be preferred to the age of fanaticism. Better to have a generation which believes in nothing, not even in itself, than a generation which believes with such intensity that it can prosecute for *lèse-majesté* the ill-mannered buffoon who amuses himself by spitting upon the national gods. The one thing intolerable to the pessimist is that any man should have a conviction about anything under the heavens. Let him join the multitude of those who sit enraptured while Wagner expresses their sense of world-weariness and spiritual disgust, and they will count him wise. But should he dare to maintain that there are still in the world such realities as honour, before which the conscience must bow, as loyalty, which makes its requisition upon the secret resources of the soul, and they hear him as through cotton wool. He speaks to them of things that belong to ancient times.

What is the reason for this general sense of fatigue? One explanation is that the idea of impending doom, which has always been within the mental horizon of man, is now vividly realised by the men of our time. Through the whirling dust-storms raised by the industry of mankind can be heard the incessant falling of those waters which bear us all to other and unknown shores. Not all the accumulation of our interests and the increase of our distractions can prevent us from perceiving the evanescence of what we do. We watch the

swift coming of the Man who carries the Scythe. The Arcadians in Poussin's pastoral landscape bend down with wide eyes to read upon the tomb the mystical words "Et ego." Already they feel that into the garden of life there has entered the chilling presence of a hated foe. This it is which makes men weary of the world. It gives poignancy to that last word of Augustus Harris, "I want a long, long sleep." It compels us to understand that, unless there is something constant beneath this ever-varying flux of time, we have lived and laboured but in vain.

This sense of world weariness makes men shrink from the boisterous performances of those who think that nothing has been known or seen before to-day. It is for a few days a matter of wonder that the mystery of flying should be made clear. But the remarkable thing is the comparative indifference to the possible meaning of this discovery. Is it that there is dawning upon the normal man the truth that, after all, these things make little difference in the final account of life ?

We are tempted to believe that some such recognition of the truth is coming to most men. They are not passionately interested in the explorations of men to the Pole. No one can engender in their souls keen enthusiasms over any political theory. They have come to understand what small difference these things make, in the long run, to the masses of men. That apathy which the publicists deplore may be the sign of a deeper wisdom. It may be the expression of that scepticism which is beginning to call in question, not religion, but the gods that have been placed on altars where the sacred fire used to burn.

In his student days, Marcus Dods found himself sitting, one dull afternoon, with an old woman talking over many things. While they talked the bell of the neighbouring church tolled out the death of some human

creature, on which the old woman's comment was, "Ay, there's another got away," as if men were in some kind of prison. And perhaps the old lady's judgment was not entirely beside the mark. For to many of those who have lived and laboured longest in the world, it has seemed as though it were but a jail. While within it, the free movements of the human spirit are constricted by intolerable bonds.

And wherefore should we not confess that we have found it unsatisfactory. Why not admit that it fails to minister to those higher appetites which mark us off as men?

"Since beyond these walls no heavens there lie
Joy to revive or wasted youth repair,"

we must not be expected to welcome the movements of life's wheel as though they were stages in a heavenward pilgrimage.

What is the use of these good people telling us to cultivate happiness? Charlotte Brontë answered that silly gospel finally when she reminded us that happiness is not a potato, that you don't buy it at the seed shop. Some of us require rather more than a sound digestion and plenty of coarse feeding to satisfy our lust for joy. What is more maddening to a sensitive soul than this stupid kind of comfort? People who have been labouring at the destruction of beliefs which once sustained the human spirit tell us to be happy. They who have turned the fair palace into a crumbling ruin, expect us to sing amongst the wreckage. We are to learn how to enjoy life. It is our duty to be eternally grateful to the primordial element which hurled us, heedless of our will, out of the infinite spaces into the world we chance to know.

Of course, it would be satisfactory to our teachers if, after having discovered that the multiplication table is

false, we still continued to use it. We should not then interfere with any of the vested interests that are concerned with the working of multiplication sums. It is true that these teachers are supposed to have killed the conscience by analysing it into a social product or a superstitious residuum. Yet they still insist that we respect its monitions as binding upon all mankind. But suppose we, who are amongst the emancipated, refuse to continue our respect for these badly-dressed idols of silly generations. Time was when men felt that country, home, religion were words that stirred the blood. But since the modern analytical anarchist has begun his proclamation of the new evangel we have changed all that. Why then should we be expected to revere that which is no longer venerable? Are we children that we should be imposed upon by plethoric old gentlemen clad in red cloth and rabbit skin? Are we to salute them as the City Fathers? Must we believe that they care one stiver for anything beyond the filling of their own breeches' pocket? When will the clever gentry who talk to us from their elevated platforms, from behind their white shirts, about our duty to our country, about the honour of the nation, who continue to dilate upon the sacred rights of citizenship and all the other flatulent nonsense with which they fill the empty spaces of their speeches, learn that we also are intelligent and have studied logic? Recollect that we too can put our tongue in our cheek and smile at their posturings and vapourings as at the contortions of epileptic chimpanzees.

For we have done no more than learned the lesson which they and their kind have been teaching us for a hundred years. We have learned to distrust the values of the market-place and the forum. Perhaps we never had great faith in these. But we have come now to deny the values of religion. We are sceptical about the worth of the ethical principles. Finally, we are dubious

about the fictitious value which has been attached to life itself.

Is it not time, indeed, that the Criminals of the Chair were prosecuted? The charlatans in high places ought to give an account of themselves. Scribblers of pornography and preachers of an intellectual Nihilism need to be brought to book. For too long we have accepted their word as final. It has been assumed that in the ravings of these priests of the populace we were listening to the judgments of a Delphic wisdom. They have robbed life of its gold and glory. And now we see how near to the truth is that description which makes of life a hospital, where the inhabitants spend their time reviling each other and their diseases. The instinct for worship was once able to lift the poor hind into some dim region where his soul could find refuge from the asperities of existence. But that escape has been made impossible for the new generations by the neglect and indolence of those to whom it was committed. The habit of communion with each other in the presence of the Highest has been made almost ridiculous in the eyes of men. The noblest expression of pure human fellowship which has ever claimed the respectful adherence of mankind has been almost destroyed by the cheap witticisms of the cultured classes. Hallowed restraints once kept the youth of former generations from treating contemptuously the traditions of their fathers. But these have been broken through by the insurgent influences of our time. The result of this is that the rich worship God only when threatened with personal calamity. Some more distinguished member of Society may make fashionable, for a year, attendance upon the Almighty's House. But the good custom soon grows stale. The so-called aristocracy were once presumed to be guardians of public virtue. But they are probably more hygienically sound and morally diseased than at any time during the last

thousand years. Their women are devoured by ambition for notoriety. They hate the duties of motherhood as an intolerable burden for which they indict the Almighty daily at the bar of their own wisdom. It seems to them that the less they are clad the more they are admired. They entertain a dread of poverty which makes them the prey of every Company promoter with more courage than conscience. For the most part these people are a living libel on the Vanes and Howards who once made the nobility of England a power throughout the world, the paragons of manly virtue and seemly grace.

They once could claim a right to lead the democracy. But whatever prescriptive right they ever had to that honour has long since been thrown away. They have sacrificed it to the worship of a plutocracy which knows no law, and respects no authority save that which speaks in terms of cash. Democracy is learning to walk on its own feet. It needs no help from those who still think themselves the born leaders of the human race. It has determined to overhaul and remodel all our institutions. They must be judged by those who believe in the rights and obligations of individual man.

What an opportunity the Gentlemen of England have had ! What a privilege they have thrown away ! They might have lived amongst their own people, contented with a fair remuneration for their money. Then they could have escaped the blighting doctrine that deer and pheasants are more important than human creatures. Rooted in the country's life they would have been the true arms of England. To the manufacturers they could have left the task of making money and spoiling cities. For them there would have been their farms, their lands and the respect of a sturdy peasantry. But the gentlemen of England wanted the wealth of the world. They were not satisfied with the honour accruing from birth and the simple dignity of a great position. Well, they

have their reward. It is found in the derision with which their claims to leadership are treated by the men of all nations.

Life, says the bitter-hearted Strindberg, allows us to choose either luxury or the laurel, but it will not give us both. The men who have chosen luxury as their ideal of life may get what they desire. He who thinks that there is no other test of life save that found in the money-bags of Cræsus and the feasts of Lucullus will surely not be wholly deceived. Such men want luxury, and the man who wants it with a sufficient intensity of desire will not miss his goal. The laurel is far enough removed from the reach of their hand. But there is something more important than either luxury or the laurel. There is a sense of inward contentment which is worth more than the mines of Golconda. The belief that life has large vistas opening on new and perilous seas, is more valuable than all Johannesburg. And this can only be given by religion at its best. This is what we are missing in our time. It is this which must again be restored to men. How else can they feel that life is capable of being shaped, as Gladstone was so fond of saying, after a finer pattern than that generally accepted. The cure for world weariness is to be found in religious belief. True, it has nearly been laughed out of the world. But it will emerge from obscurity with greater splendour when we men have learned to judge between emeralds and paste.

Perhaps the suggestion that men will ever be generally discontented with life seems an obvious absurdity. We shall be reminded that there is a Will to Live which has kept the human race going up to the present. That power is likely to continue its beneficent work for millions of generations to come. And they who think thus are entirely right. There is not going to be a universal suicide of the human race. Though people have found

that some of their dreams are not likely to be realised, they will not all hang themselves. The misanthrope cannot console himself in his dolour with the notion that the curtain is going to fall from the great Anarch's hand. Not yet will the human race conclude, like Pope's Dunciad, with the rule of Chaos and black night. Whoso looks for that is at least as much deceived as are his fellow-men.

But that is not the fear men entertain about a future from which there has faded the light of a great religion. They know that the multitude will go on reproducing themselves. New generations will force life to render them some kind of a hostelry. A measure of comfort will be found even though every form of idealism should have been blotted out of the world. But what good men may justly fear, is that the finer types of life will lose their energy. When it is recognised that there is nothing to be found in life save a series of physical sensations, man dies from within. If life offers only that which may please the palate of a pig, the finest spirits will spurn the gift that has been thrust upon them.

And already there are indications that this fear is not entirely causeless. The students of Eugenics deplore the fact that the socially higher grades of humanity are not reproducing themselves. There is no such fecundity amongst them as is found in the lower social orders of mankind. It may be the result of purely natural causes, as indicated by Spencer. Sterility may be the law for those orders of genius which are dependent upon highly complex nervous structure. Or the explanation may be found in a less worthy form. But it is at least alleged that the finer races of mankind are not keeping pace with death. One gifted woman, Sarah Grand, tells us that the best women are not willing to be mothers of men, if their children are to be made food for powder. Others find the cause in a natural shrinking from the inevitable pains of

life. Many may believe that it is the result of a dread of poverty, actual or relative. For we have been learning from our modern teachers that poverty is a crime.

Or the explanation may be found in the disgust with which many of our moderns look upon life. Having weighed its gifts against its requisitions they decide that for a thinking being to produce another creature subject to the malady of thought, is a crime against their conscience. It seems to them an offence against those of whom they might be the parent.

But is not that theory of life already condemned which hinders us from multiplying the best representatives of the human race?

What apology can be made for that system of thinking which leaves the task of peopling the earth to those who are least likely to cherish the high traditions of humanity?

Our modern prophets are crying out about the need for the man of genius. They invite our institutions to labour towards the one end of producing this Superman of the future. We decline to join in that cry. For we doubt whether it is the so-called man of genius that we require. No, what we need is a revaluation of the facts of life by the mass of men, who are not geniuses. This need should be voiced in strident tones. We must have an alteration of a system by which the most favoured section of mankind abuses the gifts and denies the rulership of the moral code. Mankind cannot leave the mighty task of providing heroes to those who seem least qualified for the holy function.

But the true answer to these petulant clamours for a new genius is found elsewhere. We shall never induce the best men and women to help in the creation of a better type than themselves, until we have taught them to believe in the worth of life. And we shall never teach them the worth of life until we have led them to

believe that it is not an end in itself, but a means to an even higher end—the possession and maintenance of the soul.

That is why we are driven back to Jesus for our hope of the future. For He has dared to hold continually before men this majestic faith. The infinite value of mortal existence is His primary dogma. His teaching stands or falls by its veracity here. We need not imitate that Lady Mary Coke who was always scolding the living and crying over the dead. For there is more in the present than men are willing to discern or to admit as existing even when they do discern it. There is surely in the grave of this present age a ghost concealed which will rise again, embodied and robed, to walk amongst us with the old and entrancing countenance of the Christian faith.

No less a revolution than this can alter the present condition of society. This is the first requisite for that age of which the irreligious humanitarians so fondly dream. Until then there will be the stupefied multitude, looking up like hungry sheep that are not fed. They will continue to suspect their rulers to be criminals of a deeper dye than those who figure in the dock. Beside them there will be those creatures who once were men, avid of new sensations, capable of saying with George Moore that the commonplace and the natural is abhorrent to them, willing to shatter every commandment if they may titillate their nerves with a new sensation.

Into this world there must come again the mild authority of Jesus. His word must once more find an echo in the breast. Something of that meek acceptance of life as a gift from God, that joyous heroism with which He lived, must be given to us again.

How boldly Jesus has asserted the value of life as a scene of spiritual discipline! The trickery and self-deception of men may move Him to a gentle irony, but

before life's final issues He is always grave and calm. He knows of no casuistry by which we can escape responsibility for our use of the divine gifts. His words are a gentle reproach to the man who chooses the vulgar possessions, great though they be, and allows the sacred treasure to pass him by. Pilate cannot inveigle Him into an admission that a Roman consul is beyond good and evil. Gentle as He is in all His dealings with the weak, He would have scorned the creed which makes comfort more important than fidelity to conscience. He fears not death because He lives in the presence of the giver of life. The waters of eternity fall gently on His hearing; for He is ready to be carried down the great river when His hour has come. You cannot startle Him by telling Him of the new things men have done. Their discoveries may please Him, but they do not enslave Him. There is no suggestion in His words that we should disbelieve in truth and yet act as if we believed, for the good of unborn generations. That men should sacrifice the delight of worship and communion at the altar of God because it had ceased to be fashionable, would have caused Him to reflect again on the frequency of human error. For the world weary He has an inspiration which never fails. He can inject into their anæmic veins the blood of a new and vigorous manhood. To eyes which are dim to the glories of the world He can give the purged vision of God's lover.

He knows nothing of that fear of life which would make us hesitate to accept its most sacred responsibilities. The teacher who applied the term Father to the Eternal Spirit has sanctified paternity for every man. On every mother rests his sweetest benediction. Children were to him the heritage of the Lord, images of the heavenly life. Belief in the goodness of the world rings through his speech like the gay carillon of silver bells. Had he despised life his sacrifice would have been shorn of half

its glory. It is the lover of life, the devotee of all the beauty of the world, who enters into the dim valley of death.

This is the heroic spirit of which in recent years mankind has been slowly bled. Into our pallid souls there must come again the vital stream of His transforming energy. Set Jesus in the heart of men, and life will no longer terrify them. Let Him become their Lord, and death becomes the decree of a providence which never fails to bless. For He will lead them to the high mountains, where the tired eye can rest on wide expanses, and lose the sense of aching nerves in gazing into the infinite blue.

CHAPTER IV

JESUS AND FALSE INTERPRETATIONS

EVERY religion must be prepared for competition with other forms of thought and piety. Unless we can guarantee that the faith held for so many centuries is capable of giving a sufficient answer to the spiritual requirements of our age, we must be content to see it pass into the museum of effete superstitions and corrupt beliefs.

That any writer or speaker should be infected with the virus of partiality for agencies hostile to religion is inconceivable. That he should have allowed his antipathy towards religion to lead him into misrepresentation is not to be believed. The admission that this is possible would be so unusual as to imply that our beloved enemies had embraced the religion they formerly despised. We should be obliged to credit them with learning from its precepts a humility to which they were strangers.

Assuredly, if the religion of Jesus is ever banished to oblivion, the splenetic elements in human nature will be in sad distress for lack of a target.

Having slain the ideas incorporated into the religion of Jesus, men must find some other object on which to vent their vocabularies. Woe then to any institutions still standing on which they may experiment. Then will come the turn of the ancient and stupid habit of wearing clothes. The preposterous custom of having children

and providing for their necessities out of one's private purse must be made to appear ludicrous. It will be the duty, cheerfully performed, of these enemies of the sane, to express their detestation of obsolete superstitions. What substitutes then have these haters of the religion of Jesus to offer in its stead ?

One of the alternatives for Christian faith offered to us to-day is the belief in life itself, regarded as separate from all considerations of its final purpose. This is held by those who have perceived that to take away the belief in an absolute religion and a continuous life, may leave men confronting a darkness so intense, that despair, culminating in the practical denial of life, is forced upon them.

These teachers naturally argue that such a belief is in agreement with the facts of science and of experience. They tell us that the fierce cry for continuity of existence, which has been heard for generations amongst the nations of the West, is only a sign of their intense individuality. It springs from an egoism—which has erected itself fiercely against the decrees of the universe. It has bidden defiance to the plain instruction of nature. In contending for the preservation of the individual against the pressure brought to bear upon it by science and the sceptical philosophies, these nations have simply been expressing their own will to live. Their action does not affect the truth that God has denied them the desired privilege.

In the Buddhistic religions, where the theory of life which confines its activities within the range of the present system has its freest play, the consequences of the theory may be most accurately traced. It cannot be said that the results recommend the theory to men of another race. Great religions these certainly are, but they do not help men to an appreciation of the joy of living. The central idea of their system of thought is

the worthlessness of human life. They carefully inculcate the habit of indifference. Men must rise superior to those desires that spring from the will to live. They must view with compassionate tolerance the foolish labours of men inebriated with the wine of life.

Such men only see the vanity of all things. Here, then, is the fruit of a religion which denies that individual life is of eternal worth.

Some of our English thinkers have accepted the teaching of Schopenhauer, and have denied the permanent value of life. They have endeavoured, as the Japanese say, to save their face, by asserting that life requires no apology beyond itself. We are to cease from these moonstruck dreamings about a world to come. Let us submit, say they, to those restrictions from which we cannot escape. And yet they expect us to maintain in its freshness the power to enjoy and use life to the full.

This is inspiriting doctrine for those who are already able to do without it. Doubtless there are those who can find in life a sufficient explanation of itself. Such men have exceptional ability to use what life offers to them. Don Juan may view life as a pleasurable series of adventures in pursuit of the eternal feminine. Sipping honey from the flowers blooming on every side, gaily indifferent to the consequences of his playful performances, he is not made melancholy by any disposition to look before and after. This is the curse only of those who live through other media than their five senses.

Nor is this an impossible judgment for those who are possessed of the arts of command. The statesman who can immerse himself in the political squabbings of his day, may find life interesting enough. For he imagines that by twisting and altering the inscriptions on the statute book he is revolutionising the life of

Millet's peasant. In the joy of battle with his peers he may find a substitute for that immortal hope which springs within the breast.

But, after all, the conquerors in life's warfare are exceptional. The men who can play the part of a Marlborough and ride the whirlwind, are but a few in any age. The millions must always be deprived of this anodyne for the disappointments and misjudgments of existence. And we ask for a belief which will offer hope to the rank and file of humanity. The immortality which consists in admission to the Choir Invisible is a worthless gift to the dying tramp. A select company of choralists who are to vocalise throughout eternity can offer no vacancies to the drowning prostitute. Those dumb and unmusical clodpoles who make up the majority of the human race are excluded from this aristocracy of Heaven. What appeal will such an immortality make to those who are inhibited, by the inscrutable laws of nature, from participation in such seraphic performances ?

You tell us that we plain people ought to put forth all our energies in the effort to live. But what if the end of it can only be death and forgetfulness ? By what right do you make this heavy demand upon our altruistic powers ?

Is it said that we shall by acting thus increase the potential happiness of those who are to come after us ?

How do we know what will give a larger aggregate of this belauded happiness to men whom we shall never know ? Their thoughts about life we cannot understand. They may finally decide that we should have done them greater service if we had refrained from bringing them into being. Their ruling desire may be to escape from the misery into which they have been born. Our stupidly careful preparations for their advent may be but ignorant miscalculations. Those arrangements of

ours for their pleasant passage through what sombre poets have called life's wilderness, may prove the biggest blunder of all time.

Herbert Spencer noted the peril of this parental asceticism. He pointed out that many children would have more pleasing recollections of their predecessors, if their parents had been less willing to deprive themselves of innocent pleasures, in order to increase the possible delights of the next generation.

Then there is the theory that in the analysis of life's contents, we can find sufficient justification for existence. The perpetual pursuit of verifiable information is to provide us with delight. In a continuous culture we can find a substitute for the beliefs which we no longer hold.

There is a great deal of nonsense talked about the joy with which men discover physical truths. Demonstrations of the motions of stars will not seriously affect the inner life of the Batavian peasant.

The truth that the earth is journeying round the sun may leave us undisturbed. All the millions of facts which make the scientist's formulæ may be less important to a man than the birth of a child. We may easily exaggerate the pleasure which comes from this kind of investigation. For the outward pressure of the mind upon tracts of unexplored territory may bring to us but cold comfort at the last. It may only serve to convince us the more surely that we are environed by a system of laws which has no relation to a moral judgment. And that conclusion is not one which gives unmixed delight to the human mind. It may terrify by its constant pressure upon the life of the individual. Or it may suggest that nature is but a series of endless repetitions. We may see it as a cinematograph performance, interesting to the child, amusing for a time to the adult, but unutterably wearisome to one who has sat for a long

time before the procession and watched the monotonously similar pictures pass over the canvas.

Hartmann is not the only one who has complained that the inventions of civilisation have failed to add any commensurable quantity to the collective happiness of mankind. That a carriage should travel without horses, that men should be able to fly like birds, causes some wonder at the time of its discovery. But the habit of marvelling at these new proofs of man's inventive genius soon ceases. The mind comes to take them as matters of course, and to seek for some fresh source of excitement.

In fine, boredom is not less possible now to a highly intelligent and educated man than in the pre-scientific days. Let the earnest person who would improve his kind out of all recognition hold up his hands in horror. It remains true that the inventions of genius do not keep men in a constant state of surprise. Blame the world-weary person as a traitor to the interests of the Commonwealth of man. But the fact is there, that when once the spectacles of life have been seen, they may pall. The gilt has been taken off the gingerbread by the habitual use of new inventions. There is as much reason to-day to fear the horrors of ennui as in times when the full-fed man started to smash his comrade's skull for the sheer delight of having something to do.

Nor is the reason for this far to seek. As men become more entirely intellectual they are more inclined than ever to put the query, *Cui bono?* They will ask with ever greater insistence, what may be the object of all the toil and conflict endured by man under the sun? Give to them longer hours of leisure and you provide them with more frequent opportunities of questioning the worth of life. Take away from the enslaved workman the almost intolerable pressure which drives him to labour and then leads him to fuddle his dull brains with beer, and the poor fool may begin the perilous habit of

thinking. Deprive the immaculate dandy of his vapid promenades in park or ball-room and he may discover the brains within his skull. Prevent the accomplished debauchee from pursuing his accustomed vices, and you force him to the most painful of all athletic exercises, the horrible labour of reflecting upon the final questions of life.

If, then, civilisation is going to release men more and more from the pressure of external things, it must provide them with a reason for living. Set free from the demand for brute force and manual labour, man will find his Soul. Heaven knows there is need enough for this. But unless we can give men an adequate reason for living, we only increase the weight of an unintelligible world.

Shall we tell them that Chance is the ruling power of the world?

That bitter word of Strindberg's, that modern Determinism sums itself up in the word Chance, is the product of an effort to separate himself from all ancient moral bearings. He would steer his course by the flickering lights of his time. And the best that he can find for guidance is a doctrine which tells him that the acts which make men moral or the reverse are as much the result of the activity of chance forces as the falling of a dice from the player's hand.

The moralists of the world have not been favourable to the doctrine of chance as the foundation of an ideal of human conduct. Hogarth's lurid presentation of the consequences of such a theory, when turned into the actuality of practice, might have burned into the human mind the peril of such doctrines. But it is those who have drunk most deeply of modern knowledge who use this apology of the gambler as the groundwork of human conduct. The weary habitués of the roulette table, to whom Monte Carlo is the Apocalyptic City coming down from God out of heaven, are the archangels of our new

Temple. That feverish lust which keeps them for ever hovering between the Wealth of Tyre and the grave of a pauper suicide is to be the inspiration of our new ethic. They may console themselves with the assurance that their dubious industry is founded upon the same principle as the Transit of Venus and the genesis of Empires.

Much comfort will it bring to their impoverished souls to know that Chance is the ruling deity of the World! The will of man is to be of no more importance in the directing of events than the scrap of paper fluttering in the wind. This is the new beatitude, the blessedness of knowing that we are of as much importance in the scheme of things as the spindrift dropped by the storm upon the pebbled beach. And for this we are to surrender Jesus and His ideal of human worth!

For the defence of another substitute for Christianity, the theory of unadulterated Egoism, we must turn to the work of Stirner and his master Stendhal. These writers argue that the bonds of society, the claims of altruism, the relations into which the human being must enter if he is to live in the world, are all hostile to the development of the Ego. They therefore stand self-condemned.

The doctrine of Stendhal was stated with sufficient clearness in his epigram, "Now one must be either a monster or a sheep." As he had no intention of adopting the sheep-like policy, the inference is clear that the monster was nearer to his own ideal. It is not, perhaps, unimportant that this philosophy was used in practice by its author as justification for the grosser forms of vice. There is still an atheism, like that of Diderot's, which is chiefly concerned with the liberty of the passions. It has little desire for truth,—if truth is likely to hinder the gratification of a sensual impulse. It is against this intellectual lubricity, this clever apologetic for the lupanaria, that the Christian doctrine of asceticism has always been directed. And wherever the warfare

against the authority of Jesus takes this form, there should be little quarter given by those who believe in the value of social development. There is certainly little enough given by these haters of human decencies. The anarchist with the dynamite in his hand, the assassin with the knife, the apache with his knuckle-duster, are justly regarded as rebels against an order which for their sakes as well as for its own must restrain them with the strong arm. But what of the teachers who inspire these children of passion? By voice and pen they supply men with arguments why the elements which have made life venerable and beautiful should be erased from the picture. They would have only the grotesque extravagances of evil allowed to remain. These cultivated sensualists provide us with a never-ending flow of pronographic literature. Their specious pretence is that they are bound by the canons of art to describe things as they appear. Therefore women of putrescent imagination, unable to gratify their lusts after the manner of Faustina, or Catherine the Great, find a food for their passions in the portraiture of vices which are loathsome to decent men. Because they are acted in luxurious apartments, to the accompaniment of viols and sweet odours, these are not less destructive to the moral sanity of a people than the ferocious propaganda of the true Orsini or Bakunin breed. We live in an age when the vomitings of the intellectual sewer, garnished with all the spices which artistic skill can supply, are displayed to any gracious maiden who walks the streets of our important cities. The people who would be horrified at the round oath of a drunken sailor, patronise an art that would sicken a Hottentot. Women who shrink from the touch of a blackened mechanic returning from his honourable toil, as though he were a leper, may fill the vacancies of their skulls with literature produced by creatures whose bodies may be clean, but

whose minds must resemble the contents of a hotel dustbin. This is the fruit of a theory of life which is akin to that of Stendhal. Egotism is the parent of poisonous ideas, when daringly applied to life.

Amongst other theories of the time is that which would make of this present life a place of punishment for the sins committed in former stages of existence. This revival of an ancient doctrine is the consequence of that pessimism which has accompanied the advances made in the sciences and the applied arts during the last century. Men have become aware that the increase of general happiness is not commensurate with the development of material resources. So it has seemed necessary to formulate some theory as an explanation of our melancholy. The miseries which have entered, like the seven devils of the Scripture parable, into the untenanted soul of the present generation, are there because of the sins we have committed in a former existence.

Here and there we catch the accent of one who has risen above this prevailing gloom. Some one may maintain that there is good in the world in spite of many signs of corruption and failure. Thus Sir Lewis Morris had the temerity to say in his old age, "I hope that no amount of disappointment will make me adopt the fashionable pessimism of the day or any form of Shinto faith, the worship of ancestors more ignorant certainly and morally no better than ourselves." But this is not the ruling cadence of our speech. The undertone of pathos heard in much of our speaking and writing is too persistent. We cannot remain deaf to its meaning.

Even those who assert most vigorously the joy of life are not without their moments of uncertainty. Like Ibsen's Skald, they have not always the skald's thought. They can hardly disguise the fear which crouches near the hearth of life. So does the fabled Prometheus com-

fort with his words the daughters of Ocean while his own heart is gnawed by the vulture.

Is it not the complaint of every prophet of our time that the people have developed a dread of their own society? Do they not tell us that the placidity of a heart at leisure from itself has disappeared from the life of the multitude? The desire for excitement rules us all. We are unable to discover simple pleasures within the borders of our own homes. This compels the most hopeful of men to wonder whether we are losing some of the tonic elements of national life. We read of Dionysius the elder, that he was oppressed by the fear of death at the hands of those who served him. Therefore he slew one of his favourite guards for having dreamed that he murdered his master. Some such terror possesses our generation. The possibility that our life here may prove to be the real delusion is a never-ending source of alarm. We may wake in another world to find that we have pursued the elusive shadow of a joy which has no reality. This fear haunts us in our feverish and fitful slumbers. Because of it we dread the voice of those who call us from the public assemblies and the pressure of the crowd, to the quiet glades where man holds communion with himself.

There is a utilitarian aspect to this pessimism which is not to be neglected. It illustrates the form of activity which may be produced by this destruction of the imaginative spirit. There is a suggestion, made by Moleschott, that we should manure the fields with the bodies of our dead. No longer shall we leave this form of enterprise to the pirate and the slave-trader. They have often adorned the desert and the jungle with the putrefying bodies of their victims. But the civilisation which regards itself as the crown of the ages is to revert to this practice. A heavy death-list will be the surest guarantee of a fruitful and bounteous harvest. The associations

which have gathered around the place where repose the remnants of our frail mortality will cease to exercise their holy charm. The place where the tears of the widow have bedewed the ground and the orphan has lifted hands of prayer to the loved spirit he believes may still be hovering near, will become a profitable farm. Those pathetic ministrations of loving hands, which cause the violet and the rose to bloom above the ground made sacred by the long repose of the dead, will be accounted useful labours in the tillage of the soil. Hallowing associations will give place to the development of horticulture. The corrupting flesh of our ancestors will be made into a marketable commodity, subject to the laws which regulate supply and demand.

Not many of us have felt moved to admiration by the Chinese methods of fertilising their fields. We have regarded our own systems of sanitation as markedly superior to those which are practised in the Flowery Land. But with what interest will the Li Hung Chang of the future learn that a proud and cultured Europe has contrived to surpass even the frugality of his own compatriots! How he will admire the men who find, in the juices which flow from humanity in its last stages of dissolution, a profitable medium of exchange? Behold the prospect which is offered to the heritors of our lands and titles, our traditions and our faith. This is to be our reward for trying to imitate Cabanis. For this we are to make the soul a biliary secretion, and immortality the invention of a mocking ghoul.

There is a senility of sentiment, a decay of the virile passion in thought and feeling as well as in bodies.

"You," says Baudelaire to Manet, "you are only the first in the decrepitude of your art." And there is a profane zeal amongst opponents of religion in repudiating those humanities which have blossomed under the protective shadows of pious belief. They manifest an

unholy eagerness to be the herald of spiritual degeneration.

It has been metaphorically said that the dead poison the living. The impress of their personal will is felt too keenly on the existing generation. Fierce resentments are aroused by the effort of those whose hands are cold to grip the rod they cannot use. But this modern method of limiting the boundaries of their territory is likely to prove an effectual antidote. No longer will they control the fortunes of their successors. Under this projected régime the only tolerable conduct will be that which repudiates all affectionate relationship to the departed. No duty will remain save that of selling the corpse to the nearest purchaser. Then there will grow up an antipathy to the very memory of the dead. Hatred of the past may become the prevailing fashion. Vandalism will rule the world. Cenotaph and urn will become pathetic relics of a generation which could believe in the value of pity and the triumphant vindication of love.

These are some of the alternative schemes of life which are offered to us by those who have decided that there is no message for this age in the teaching of Jesus. No excess of diffidence prevents them from claiming the allegiance of mankind for their theories. And one asks, with a sigh, is it for this that men have turned away from the majestic beauty of the Galilean that they may adore the resurrected ghosts of unclean and savage faiths?

Put by the side of these theories of life the simple and bold conceptions which are associated with the name of Jesus. He has not made the mistake of separating life from its past and future. We are not invited by Him to consider the value of life apart from its implications. For Him it is connected with God at birth and death. It stretches out towards an infinite sea, in which it will not be destroyed, but completed and fulfilled. Life is

important for what it suggests of the deep from whence we came. It is of worth to men, because it is a stage in a career which transcends the bounds of human knowledge. Does He ask us to sacrifice, to deny the self? Then it is only that we may find our self again in a new and nobler form? He knew the spiritual hunger of the multitude. Therefore He never put them off with the stony food of a prospective life in other and superior men. Each soul is for Him a microcosm, imaging the universe. Every man is travelling towards a celestial habitation, fraught with immeasurable potencies. When did Jesus suggest that men should be good that they might advantage a future race of human beings? For Him the fisherman was already a divine creature. The Galilean peasant was an heir of heaven. The ages might labour in travail. But here already in this soil-stained tiller of the ground was the world's choicest product. Jesus knew the worth of human knowledge. All things brought to Him their messages of wisdom. Flower and tree and rushing wind were pregnant with divine teaching. But He never supposed that in knowledge alone, or in its application, is happiness to be found. That blessed gift comes only to the healed and quiet spirit. How He would have smiled at the childish thought that with these clever toys of our modern world, these splendid ingenuities of man, we can satisfy the hungry soul! Did He ever tell us that our lives depended on the movements of some incalculable and insentient Chance? In the hands of our Father we are safe, is His answer to the unquiet spirit. And when He saw men putting the development of their own ego in the front of their scheme of life, what would He have said? Would He have countenanced the libertine who makes his false philosophy an apology for his passions? Did He not remember that with every seducer there is also one who is seduced? Did He not know that

the conquering Lothario leaves behind him a train of victims? With what immeasurable scorn He would have rebuked the human brutes who fill the brothels of the world and then talk about their philosophic egotism. Or do we find Him countenancing that brainless and soulless materialism, which would make the ashes of our dead into a theme for barter? He who mourned with Mary over the dead knew better. The voice that woke Lazarus from his slumbers, peals through the years its indignant protest against the ribald crew who would begrudge the living their tender recollections of the dead. He knew that from mausoleum and ancient barrow the past speaks to the present. There may we catch the cadence of a music unheard in busy mart or crowded street. Like the sad melody of the nightingale amongst the autumn leaves, fraught with the ceaseless sorrow and deathless hope of the world, the Past speaks to us from the grass-grown graves.

Seldom can the need have been greater for the coming of a Master Spirit; one who, in the midst of these clashings of desire, can speak the word which shall still the tempests of human passion. Who shall give to our perturbed spirits the calm of a summer sea? Jesus we need, that in the midst of these Bacchic rages of the lower man the celestial voices may be heard.

PART II.—PERSONAL

CHAPTER I

JESUS AND THE VALUE OF HUMAN LIFE

WE are indebted to Lotze for a noble defence of humanity's belief in the soul. But that able thinker did not carry out the logical implication of his doctrine. He believed that the finite individual existed to carry out some divine purpose. But when the purpose was completed the self which had been its instrument ceased to exist. Few theories of life offer more difficulties than this. For it suggests that a self-conscious creature, capable of looking before and after, susceptible to the influences of joy and sorrow, may be used like a potter's vessel, and then ruthlessly thrown aside as of no further service to the maker. Granted that this may be so, every living man may draw up an indictment of that Power by which he has been created only that at last he may be contemptuously destroyed. How shall we reconcile this with any theory of divine justice? Life once given, with its potency for thought and feeling, and the individual may well ask why he should not be permitted to continue from stage to stage of that ascent which he has at least been able to conceive.

Achilles would rather be a herdman amongst the living than captain amongst the dead. There, in the symbolic figure of the poet's creation, is expressed the thought of all reasonable men. Life once given is not to

be taken away without some reason. It is an insult to intelligence to think of the life of man, with its wealth of experience, its dreams of the future, and its capacities for further expansion, being narrowed down to the limits of the grave and a paltry handful of dust. Not thus have the wisest and boldest thought of life. True it is that we cannot argue with the immeasurable power of God. We may not lift up our puny strength against the divine decree, whatever the decree may be. But we can maintain that the sense of right has been betrayed, that the voice within us which has been to us as the authentic utterance of God has been false, in its most inward and sacred revelations, if we have no further life in which to complete the inchoate purposes of our earthly existence. We continue to ask for the significance of life. What is the intention which will give dignity and worth to all the perplexed ambitions and strivings of men? And nothing short of a further and a fuller life can satisfy the reasonable expectations of the human spirit. Only when we think thus of life does it become possible for us to treat seriously the human travail in which we are all partners. Given that the meanest being may be pregnant with eternal possibilities and life may be made intelligible. Without it we are, indeed, no more than dreams are made of, and all our little life is only too surely rounded with a sleep.

“A capacity consisting in a self-conscious personality cannot be supposed to pass away. It partakes of the nature of the eternal.

“We cannot believe in there being a real fulfilment of such a capacity in an end which should involve its extinction, because the conviction of there being an end in which our capacities are fulfilled is founded on our self-conscious personality, on the idea of an absolute value in a spirit which we ourselves are. And for the same reason we cannot believe that the capacities of men can

be really fulfilled in a state of things in which any rational man should be treated merely as a means and not as in himself an end."

Thus speaks T. H. Green, he of whom the Oxford undergraduate said, that to many men he took off his hat, but that to Green he would be willing to take off his head. From the depths of that great soul's experience there comes this protest against doctrines which would rob human life of its glory by reducing it to something more fantastically vain than a universal South Sea Bubble.

O, honourable Oxford Don, who didst teach the men of thy generation that it was possible for one to be a believer and yet to keep burning the Divine fire of reason! If, in that other more ethereal world thou dost still follow the fortunes of the cause in which thou wert a doughty fighter, let the benediction of thy Shade rest upon those raw recruits and tired veterans who still strive to keep the old flag flying. For fain would they believe that thou lookest, not unkindly, on the labours of their hands.

What can we hope for? Man will not be satisfied until he has the assurance that his life will not be destroyed, but will expand beyond the limits of the present world to one beyond. He longs for some suggestion that his purposes will not be utterly broken off by death. If this be but a dream, at least it is not unworthy of the high nature of man. That is a true instinct which leads him to rebel against the complete annihilation of himself and of all his works at death. For can there be anything more cruelly humiliating than that human life should be always expanding, growing more fruitful and beautiful, only that it may be snapped like a dead branch from a tree when it has attained its farthest reach of earthly perfection?

Waste may be a part of that dispensation under which we live. The quantity of blossom may be vastly

in excess of the fruit permitted to ripen. But that all the wealth which has been poured out upon the world shall result in nothing more than a transient vapour, is unbelievable to man.

The manner in which we judge the spiritual aspirations of men will be determined by our conception of his nature. Thinking of him under the control of one set of ideas, we shall scoff at his pretensions and look upon him as an inflated creature sadly needing correction. Studying him under the inspiration of another system of ideas, we shall feel that his aspirations are not without some justification. Even if they are to be denied their full fruition, we shall not complain of him for entertaining them. For we shall know that he has been all the better as a man for his determined maintenance of these uplifting hopes.

The spectacle of life, as he saw it in the time of the Commune, with men raving for vengeance and calling down curses upon the civilisation which had produced for them such miseries, led Taine to make the declaration that man is a wild beast, carnivorous by nature, thirsting for blood. The philosophy which he had forged for himself could offer no consolation in that hour of bitter discovery. He stood amongst the ruins of his faith, and could find in man no promise of improvement or suggestion of a better day.

A keen-eyed student of human nature, who had made all mankind his field of observation, believing that he could find it all reflected in his beloved Paris, Balzac could find in man nought but the desire for money. All other passions were absorbed by this mastering greed. To acquire and to hold the wealth of the world, and to be ranked amongst the moneyed lords of creation! This was the ambition which surged up from the depths, whenever the flimsy cedar work of culture was uncovered and the real man seen beneath.

Let the doctrine of Protagoras be accepted as true, and man be the measure of all things. Then, if the ruling passion of man, the one controlling factor in his existence, is that sordid hunger for money which the French writer found in him, the most Cassandra-like prophesy would not be too harsh a conclusion to humanity's stage play. The misanthropes would have proved themselves to be right. Timon's words would be the final utterance on the nature of man. All of us, feeling that we were part of the unhallowed company, might hope that the seas would swallow us up, and beasts have the world in empire.

For of what value beyond the gratification of one of the lowest of our appetites would there be in this life of ours? Could we find any reason in the nature of things why fires and storms and the fell stroke of lightning should not wither up the whole breed of man, if there were nothing in him better than this greed of gain? To share an appetite with the coyote and the wolf should be humiliation enough to those who boast that they are the lords of creation. But to be possessed by a vile passion of which not even the quadruped is guilty, might well sicken us with the farce of human life.

And yet if we put aside the authority of Religion, refusing to listen to her voice, however sweetly she would charm us, what is there that can give a redeeming dignity to human life and make us immune from the contemptuous criticism of our kindred?

It may be still worth while for us to live, even if there is no ground for the spiritual ideals which have shed their glory over human life. For the Zulu proverb is at least true, that he who lives long has a great many old clothes. But this seems a poor sort of apology for the paragon of animals to offer for his continued pollution of a world which would apparently be better without him. To hoard up ancient rags and shoes for the delectation

of posterity is, after all, a mean ambition for the most intellectual of God's creatures. Yet what else does all our frugal forethought, our abstaining and hoarding through the generations, amount to, if the end of the dreary pageant is no more than a few struggling bipeds on an ice-floe in the northern seas?

By the side of this conception of life, which is the logical deduction of all materialistic philosophies, there is a pathetic dignity in the dying words of Leo IXth, "The cell which was my dwelling when a monk expanded into yonder spacious palace, and shrinks again to this narrow coffin." Indeed, the most stupid Trappist who wanders through his dreary days in the anticipation of the hour of his release, has a nobler conception of the nature of man than that which is to be inferred from a philosophy which denies the spiritual and transcendental in all its manifestations.

Something beyond this shambles of a world there must be if the idea of justice is to remain embedded in the human mind. For man cannot understand why he should be expected to recognise justice as an obligation upon himself, when in his own life, its central home, its being is denied.

If there is no continuity for the life here but begun, then surely the notion that the God of all the earth will do right must be set aside, and with it must go the idea of a fundamental justice as the ground-plan of the world. For if man is to consider justice seriously he must have the assurance that it will not be denied him in the final arrangement of the world's affairs. Give to him this guarantee and you liberate him from the tyranny of a fear which will otherwise stultify all his efforts to give justice a firm foothold in the present world.

It is easy for an ambitious and predatory monarch of the type of the Great Frederick to taunt his soldiers with the question, "Dogs, would you live for ever?"

Let them live just so long as they serve his purposes and then be turned into food for powder. That is the natural judgment of the man who has used them as the sword with which he carves his own way to earthly immortality. But the king forgets that the existence of his meanest camp-follower is as important to the camp-follower as his own kingly person is to the ruler of millions. And the sneering interrogatory of the bitter-tongued monarch carries with it its own answer. For that is exactly what men do want, the assurance that their life may be something more than the flaring of a brief candle to be extinguished by the night wind of death.

The charge which Shaw makes against Shakespeare, when he is indulging in his favourite occupation of "blaming the bard," is that he did not answer the question, "What are we alive for?" Had the poet been able to answer that question in its entirety, he would have been much more than the myriad-minded man he actually was. He would have been to us a God. But at least he has left on record, in innumerable passages, his dissatisfaction with an existence which is snapped off at death like a tender flower, without the promise that in another and richer life it may bloom again. More than this discontent with the existing order we cannot justly expect from any mortal. There is no other answer indeed, save that given by Jesus, which can meet the crying need of man. For the accomplished work of Christianity is that through its influence man has been raised out of the kingdom of nature, as Professor Butcher puts it, and taken into the Commonwealth of God. He has ceased to be a mere phantom and has become a personal being. No longer does he belong to the category of things that are used by some higher power and then thrown away as an old tool may be discarded by the labourer. He has become a person whose end is in himself, in the full development of the forces which make him a man. Whoever, there-

fore, proposes to make of him an agent and nothing more, is a traitor to the high idea of Humanity. The bonds which make him a slave are not so much a clog to the free spirit as they are an insult to the dignity of man.

There is a beautiful custom amongst the Chinese which would of itself alone save them from the charge of being a people bound by purely materialistic ideas. Every year at the festival of spring a beggar is carried in a chair through the public streets, being made a mandarin for one day. From his rags and poverty he is set free for the space of twelve hours and is treated as though he were a member of that caste which receives the homage of all Orthodox Celestials. That exaltation of Mordecai to the seat of honour is what Christianity has accomplished for the average man throughout the world. It has set him free from the tyranny and tutelage of circumstance and has made him one of the Company of Immortals. Say if you will that the exaltation is fictitious. Complain if you like that the pressure of the actual world must be all the more severe upon those who have accepted what *Merimée* called "the dream of the Nazarene." But do not deny that the Roman slave and the European proletarian have felt this inward exaltation, and have rejoiced in a deliverance which set them above the limitation of poverty or serfdom.

And the sense of spiritual enfranchisement which is thus produced in men is of importance to others besides the impecunious and the ignorant. For there is no man who is not at last brought to the consciousness of his own poverty if his possessions are only those which can be catalogued in terms of earthly values. The child of genius is as open to the attacks of Chance as the member of the illiterate crowd. The quality which has distinguished him from the multitude is held by the most fragile of all tenures. Turner will at last feel that the hand which has served him so faithfully will no longer

transcribe his marvellous poems in colour. Scott cannot restrain his tears as he realises that he can no longer call up spirits from the vasty deep with the freedom of his vigorous manhood. If life is to have a worth independent of change, the wealth it holds must be capable of transcending the bounds prescribed by earthly experience. Life's true riches must be portable to an ampler world. In the moment of dissolution the man must feel that he is but entering upon a new and more magnificent adventure.

That this has been accomplished by the influence of Jesus upon the soul of multitudes of men, is a commonplace of religious experience. There are still amongst us many who hold this heritage in fee, believing that it is the only thing which saves human life from being a contemptible farce. Let the men who despise the believer for his foolish adherence to an outworn superstition tell us what they have to give, to take the place of this majestic faith. Let them show to us a list of those who have confronted the mystery of death with the same abounding confidence, who have entertained the same scorn for the immediately visible possessions of earth, and have felt even with the accompaniment of the outer man's decay, the deepening and expansion of the life within. If they have no alternative to offer which can be sanely compared with this accomplished work, will they tell us whether we can afford to banish to the Hebrides of history, the forlorn lands of the past, the Person who has thrilled humanity with this omnipotent belief in its own imperishable worth?

CHAPTER II

JESUS AND THE NORM OF HUMAN LIFE

THE world has a permanent need for some ideal and heroic figure who shall serve as the norm by which the characters of men may be judged. There must be some standard of value, otherwise how can we decide whether the conduct of men is in agreement with the best that we know, or is simply worthy of general reprobation and disgust? And it has been believed now for many centuries that there cannot be found a more fitting personality by which to measure the worth of human character than that of Jesus. For some of the purest souls that the world has ever known He has been and remains the representative of the uttermost reach of the human spirit.

Without entering upon disputed theological points, it may be said with safety that this figure is not to be explained as the natural product of His surroundings. The notion that He was the inevitable result of conditions predominant in the world at that time is not satisfactory. It could only find a place in the mind of one who was forgetful of the inherent worth of the human spirit. We ought not to allow our judgment to be biased by the emphasis now laid on the situation of the individual. More important still is the influence exercised by the individual upon his surroundings. Jesus was more than an accidental result of conditions prevailing in His age. Those conditions were not without precedent or imitation.

Why have not other persons produced similar effects upon the course of history?

We hear much of the holy purpose animating the mind of the modern Eugenist. Why can he not so arrange the affairs of life, so manipulate external conditions, as to produce another personality as impressive and vitally effective as Jesus has proved Himself to be? On the theory here considered, there are many villages in the world which might serve as the leaping-point for the teacher. The world awaits one who shall emerge from the Unknown and bring to us a message as awakening and illuminating as that associated with the name of Jesus.

Still less is it possible to find an explanation of His advent which does not allow of a directing intelligence in the world. To borrow a phrase from the science of the day, He cannot be interpreted as if He were a sport in life. The world is a scene in which great events do not happen without some provision on the part of the unseen Guide. Is the rise of the Grecian State, for instance, and its contribution to the intellectual life of the world an accident of development? Is it not rather part of a scheme of which we see only glimpses here and there, but which nevertheless exists? If there is such an order in the world, then the arrival of Jesus amongst men is not to be dismissed as a purposeless incident in the movement of humanity. The conditions in which Jesus worked were, indeed, of assistance to Him in the accomplishment of His task. The nation into which He was born influenced Him. The geographical situation of His native district, the history of the past, contributed to form His character. The fact that the country was a kind of meeting-place for many different forms of culture, offered many facilities to a religious teacher. These considerations have led calm observers to believe that there were signs of purpose in His birth.

The selection of such conditions of life demand for their explanation the operation of a direct and creative Will.

Are we prepared to say that the advent of Jesus is the result of pure Chance? This is the last word of a soulless and godless Determinism. It is the apology of those who reject other explanations as unworkable, and yet will not confess that they have no better to offer. But consider what it must mean in this connection. The most prejudiced antagonist will probably admit that the coming of Christianity into the world has been productive of benefit to mankind. We may ignore those persons who are always thinking of what ought to happen in a world populated by unimpassioned phantoms. Let us think of those who know man for the quarrelsome, disputatious, envious, and yet glorious creature he really is.

It will be admitted by these that no one has moved the soul of humanity to such high and thrilling music as Jesus of Nazareth. In defiance of all the abuses which have gathered about the Christian faith, it has been the most valuable asset in the spiritual balance-sheet of humanity.

Are the chance sports of life so productive of the things valued by the wise? Can we believe this result to be the spontaneous product of accident? Then every other form of deity should be banished from the temples of the world. To the gambler's Luck, the philosopher's Chance, should be given the primary position in every sanctuary raised to the Unknown Gods.

Chance which is thus beneficent may well become a God. Does it meet the deepest needs of men with an answer which they find satisfying to the soul? Then, while keeping its name, it has so altered its form that it has taken to itself Intelligence and Will. It has become compassionate to the sorrows of suffering men, and in so doing it has ceased to be Chance. It has suffered a sea change into something infinitely rich and strange. It

has become the God and Father of our Lord. This is one reason why we feel justified in taking Jesus as the norm of human character. The elements did so meet in Him that we can hardly hope to look upon His like again. We cannot reproduce the model in all its perfection, yet it is possible to approximate towards it by a resolute effort at imitation. It is not accidental that there has been in this world One who so completely answers to what man may be at his best. The Master Worker of the world has not simply included this character amongst many others. It has not been thrown off from His Potter's wheel as an incident in the creative work of the common day. He has given to us one representation of a finished and complete Man. It rests with us to shape our own lives on the lines of that sublimely normal character.

F. H. Bradley summarises his review of the world from the standpoint of the metaphysician with these words:

"That the glory of this world in the end is appearance, leaves the world more glorious if we feel it is a show of some fuller splendour; but the sensuous curtain is a deception and a cheat if it hides some colourless movement of atoms, some spectral woof of impalpable abstractions, or unearthly ballet of bloodless categories. . . ."

For us that fuller splendour does not remain permanently hidden, is no ballet of bloodless categories. It shows itself to us, under the inescapable limitations of our humanity, in the figure of the Nazarene. Through the medium of flesh and blood the impalpable glory of the world has been made tangible to men. That finest quintessence of the Universal Spirit, after which man so determinedly seeks, has suffered itself to be regarded by the wondering eyes of men. It has thrilled our souls with the cadences of grave and gracious human speech. Men now may know the form and fashion of the human

life they have longed to realise, of which they have felt the silent invitation, and to which the best of them ceaselessly aspire.

It is the universality of Jesus which accounts for the variety of forms in which He has appealed to the minds of men. Every form of life has discovered in Him some point of contact. The different tempers found in men can all discover in the Nazarene some shade of similarity. This gives to them a feeling of relationship. To some He has seemed to be the first of all ascetics, the master of those who have despised life. He seems to these to have held the gifts and treasures of civilisation cheap, to have condemned the lovers of the beautiful and the believers in earthly values.

To others He has appealed as the monarch of all those who have found in life itself the choicest of gifts. He has accepted life naïvely and cheerfully, with all its possible heritage of sin and woe, as the supremely generous gift of the Creator. They have found in Him the one who more than all others understood the loveliness of life. He gladly accepts the simple gifts. He is grateful for the enjoyments of the earth, the air, and the sea. He is in perfect sympathy with all the differing forms of Nature, from the lilies blooming in the field to the wild roaring of the wind across the lake. He is at home in the solitudes of hilltops beneath the light of shining stars. His glad appreciation of all these has made its powerful appeal to the children of men, and it has helped them to find in Him the One who stands nearest to their most intimate affections and universal joys.

And how magnificently He has appealed to those who have looked for the coming of a better time! The reformers of succeeding ages have gone back to His words to find the dynamite which should shake to their foundations the hoary tyrannies of the world. There is in His words an implicit faith in the ultimate victory of

good. He shows no hesitancy in telling men that, whatever may be the sacrifices they are called to make, there is a reward for them transcending every loss. Such an unbounded faith in the radical spirituality of the world has not been seen elsewhere. There is no waiting for the word of authority from without ere He speaks of that which He knows. He has seen that there is nothing so important in the world as the maintenance of the soul. He puts the health of the spirit above all other things. For Him the world is so ordered that whoso will attend wisely to the things of the soul is sure of every needful gift.

It has been suggested that Jesus died in despair. His effort to transform the values of life was foredoomed to failure. At the last He realised this truth with such bitterness that the discovery broke His heart. Such a theory leads to a direct denial of all that Jesus Himself held dear. His judgment of life and of its ultimate import was evidently that of one who saw it as a great and blessed thing. No one has ever seen the hideous deformities of existence with greater clearness. Yet He believed that if men would accept life on God's terms it would prove to be at once an adventure and a joy.

He knew that men are slow to accept it on God's conditions. They make their own terms, and speak as if they expected to be paid wages for living. Having seen this to be true, He did not hesitate when their folly and sin turned the lovely idyll of Galilee into the hideousness of Calvary. In the presence of selfish and wicked men, whose lusts had blinded their eyes to the pure truth of life, He did not flinch from the last issue set before Him. If the glory of life could only be interpreted to men by the awful horror of His own death, He would not quail before that last terrible claim. Sin has made a good world into the semblance of a Hell! Sin would hang the Best One upon a tree! But the Master would

not, because of the sin of men, deny what His life had taught in sun and rain. Life itself was good, and the meaning of its ceaseless pageant of glory and song was mercy, truth and love.

How boldly through all this time of darkness and grief He abjures every effort made to bring Him into servitude to evil. That the one pure soul of time should find at last, under the pressure of the badness of the world, that He too must make terms with evil and supplicate assistance from Satanic powers, would have been the bitterest drop in the cup of human sorrow. For Christ to have failed in those hours of trial would have meant that humanity had proved its complicity with all evil energies. But that did not happen. None could convict Him of sin. The metal rang true to the end. The gold was pure. Not elsewhere can we find that unalloyed devotion to the holiness of life. In a world in which all are failures in the moral conflict, where all alike come short of the uttermost glory, there was one who achieved a triumph even in the hour of His defeat. He took captivity captive when His own legions seemed flying in rout before the foe.

This it is which makes Him the desired ideal of the world. It is unspeakably foolish, it betrays an intelligence almost parochial, to say that this ideal is defective because Jesus was neither husband nor father, neither a holder of property nor a member of the national senate. The great battle of the world's soul against evil was to be fought out upon a stage which should command the attention of mankind. The protagonist in that conflict must be one who is completely a human person. Yet he must be representative of all the various forms of human life in their central and essential qualities. Jesus would have been no more perfect as our representative had He passed through half a dozen different trades and mastered all the professions. What is needed

for the representative Man is not that He should glorify a particular avocation. He must stand for the elements of human life in their simplicity. Jesus might conceivably have been the typical savant, or the standard politician, or the central figure in the financial world of His time. But in that case His permanent influence would have been limited in proportion to the extension of His interests in the world of His age. It may not be encouraging to those who follow the lines of temporal and practical activity. But it is not the less true that Mommsen and Mr. Carnegie, Spencer and Bismarck, are men whose appeal to the broad sympathies of humanity is limited by their success in their fulfilment of their special functions.

Jesus reduced that side of His life to the minimum. Yet He retained a firm grip upon the actualities of human experience. He is thus able to make His appeal to the universal instinct of the race. Every form of humanity He meets on its own platform. Are we to seek for a standard by which human life is to be judged? Is that standard one which cannot alter with the varying tastes of men? Then we must find it in that esoteric yet universal life in which Jesus was master. Men must be judged by the altitude of His perfect character.

The reader of literature is inclined to quarrel with most of the valuations in morals made by our fathers. An example of this disposition is found in our altered judgment of the Christian gentleman. About the beauty of this figure as He is painted for us by the older writers there is no question. Colonel Newcome embodied qualities which a less sophisticated age admired even when it was slow to imitate them. We see there the childlike simplicity, combined with high chivalry which we expect in the gentleman at his best. Never has that character been set forth more entrancingly than in the portrait of this fallible, but high-hearted, soldier. Not without

success has Kingsley, with a coarser brush, painted one of these quietly heroic figures. If we doubt whether the combination of simple piety with heroic attributes is possible, let us read again the story of Henry Havelock, or picture again the shining figure of Charles Gordon. That it is feasible and admirable could be proved, if it needed proof, from these and many another instance in the literature and biography of another age than ours. But where shall one look for the continuance of this tradition? What is the usual treatment meted out to the ideal of Christianity as set forth in human character in our own time?

To put it at its best the answer is not encouraging. Most of the characters created for us by the writer of the modern novel or drama, in so far as they are affected by Christian influences at all, are moved in the least pleasing fashion. They would repel any thoughtful man from a faith which could produce such hideous results in human life. The modern writer seems to interpret life with the conviction that any man who claims to be a Christian must either have sold his conscience for gold or be incapable of rational judgment. One has only to open the books published by leading writers of our time to find the strongest bias against every form of revealed religion. Those marmoreal figures which live in the pages of Thomas Hardy are nearly all so related to the Christian faith that they serve to show its absurdity as an explanation of world problems. The seducer of poor Tess is made to serve as an example of the dubious results flowing from conversion. There is certainly a redeeming figure in the father of Angel Clare. He is represented as a faithful disciple of the Master. He is willing to give all and suffer all if some one may, through his sorrow, be brought to a knowledge of the truth. But even here this man can only be a saint because he is without a rational understanding of the world.

The underlying assumption in all such treatment is that in this world the only alternative for the Christian is either fool or knave. If you want to be good, in the Christian sense of the term, you must be ignorant of the movements of your time. You must live in a universe which is closed to all light. You must be content to believe that there have been no discoveries made worth mentioning since your grandfather heard of the battle of Waterloo. This covert sneer at Christianity is to be found in the work of far too many of our writers. It is time they learned that a man may be a true believer without being entirely ignorant of the fact that the earth moves.

Is it not time that our writers faced the question this mode of treatment suggests. There are men of genius who claim to speak on behalf of our time. Should they not seriously consider whether they can afford to dispense with the figure of the Christian gentleman? He may finally depart from literature and life without any substitute being provided for him. But he will leave a memory beloved of all who read of him. His absence will create a gap in our social order for which no alteration of institutions or displacement of social forces can quite compensate. Are we to adopt the cheap theories which have had their vogue in all generations, theories which are permanently associated with the names of Rochefoucauld and Mandeville? Shall the high virtues of veracity and reverence be extinguished, and all men be construed as cheats and rogues? Then mankind will at least have lost one of its most beautiful and precious illusions.

The departure of this heroic figure from our literature means the vanishing of a human being with the finest perceptions. For this type of man may have any kind of political opinions, or none at all. But there is in him a knowledge of the bedrock equality of men. And this is an indispensable ingredient in the composition of the true lover of his kind. The playfulness of Uncle Toby,

the deference with which Corporal Trim treats him, does not disguise the fact that this simple-hearted man has seen into the elemental constituents of our human nature. He knows that there is more similarity than difference between him and all the other members of the human family. And this recognition of the truth is the element which goes to the making of the Christian gentleman. It saves him from those unconscious cruelties so often perpetrated by the man untouched by this spirit.

It may be urged that a knowledge of the sciences will serve as a substitute for the old humanities. A steady application of the results of that knowledge to life may do something to maintain, and even to enlarge, the influence of the democratic spirit. It may preserve amongst us the chivalry of the heart. But there are not wanting signs that this is not to be an easy task. Goethe distrusted the influence of pure science upon the soul, since it does not teach men how to maintain their sentiments unstained and pure. Zola was not prevented by his knowledge of the sciences belauded by Comte from entertaining a passionate longing for the centre of the stage. He did not find that this new revelation, which was to accomplish so much for the world, had set him free from the vanities that beset him. His disillusionment as to its effect upon the mind of the race to which he belonged is one of the most pathetic chapters in the pessimism of our time. Indeed, how can the extension of knowledge, without those humanities which our fathers studied, serve to restrain the clamant hunger of the obscure for notoriety. How can it mitigate the horrors of the narrow sphere for those who are anxious to expand their wings in the higher heavens? Let a man drink deep of knowledge without having his spirit schooled by the teachings of philosophy or the ministrations of religion. Then he will feel that in this maelstrom of a world his only course is to fight for the front seat in

the gallery of life. There can be no conviction that in the humble round of common duties he may be serving his generation. The hope of having earned the praise of One who is his taskmaster will never thrill him to high service or daring enterprise. He will remain one of those famished souls of whom the world is so full, who hate their brother man with an intensity ill concealed, except when they are able to use him for the furtherance of their own dubious ends. We read that Wellington despised his fellow-men. This is not surprising. There was in that cold heart little to respond to what was noblest in the soul of his brother. He had the assurance that this was a world in which he was ordained to rule.

This may well have helped him to treat scornfully those parasites and toadies who sought favours at his hand. But a true apprehension of the spirit of the gospel would have saved him from some of the worst blunders of his career. It would certainly have given to him that touch of passion without which he remains a frigid and austere man. We do not say that the gentleman must accept the Christian creed. But there can be no perfect gentleman without some approach to that spirit which breathes through all the words of Jesus. That noble speech reverberates its tones more or less clearly in all those who seriously endeavour to imitate Him.

This it is that we need to-day in this scrambling world. Unless something of this is retained, there will disappear the grand courtesy of the soul. We shall still have the courtier's urbanity, the polished manner of the skilled diplomat, the refined accent and cultured condescension of the high-born dame. But there will have gone that deep sympathy with the poor and the rich, that conviction of the radical oneness of humanity, which helps us to view the wealth of the opulent without envy, and even the vices of the foolish without hatred for the offender. A society which cannot permit its leaders to

believe in God, which scoffs at the first principles of faith, may serve as a decorative element in the pageant of life. But the foundation which alone can stand has been taken from it, and the worm of corruption is already gnawing at its vitals.

To Spencer it seemed that the present ideal of humanity was not Christ, but Achilles. The philosopher spoke contemptuously of the disharmony between the apparent and the real idealism of the time. Undoubtedly the contradiction does exist, and has long been recognised. But the fact that a standard has not been attained by the multitude is no reason for rejecting it as worthless. The true conclusion would seem to be the very opposite. We ought to press the authority of the standard still more insistently upon the attention of men. They will be compelled at last to acknowledge its fascination and power.

Would you put Jesus amongst the poets? Yes, if this means that His words are suffused with a sense of the beauty of the world. For He is a lover of all good things. He prefers the language of the imagination and the heart to that of the logician. But does it mean that He is to be treated as a futile dreamer of dreams? Is He to be thought of as one more of the Utopians? Is it that He has left behind Him the memory of castles in Spain which will never be built? Then there could be no falser definition of the Master or of His work. For whatever He has failed to do, this remains an accomplished fact. He has created the type of a finished man. The sculptural loveliness of the ideal has been changed into the breathing beauty of a vital reality. Would you know what man may be when the wings of the soul have grown? Look, then, upon this figure of our Elder Brother. Seek in His companionship the graces which can make even the basest churl into a gentleman, whose patent of nobility is granted by a gibbeted king.

CHAPTER III

JESUS AND THE SPIRIT OF WONDER

THERE are many men to whom the religion of Christ would appeal more powerfully if it were entirely severed from all relation with the miraculous.

In the mind of the modern man there is a strong *prima facie* case against any theory which suggests a breach of the known laws of nature.

Yet one consideration should in fairness be recognised. We have exalted these so-called laws of nature to a status of almost regal dignity. Yet they have never been so glorified by the judgment of the true scientist. For he has never hesitated to confess that to him they are merely forms of activity. The utmost that he can say of them is that they are recorded observations of modes by which Nature produces her results. He does not claim to have discovered rules that are binding in every conceivable condition of life. His formula may not be applicable in every state of the energy that animates the universe.

Thus there is no abstract argument that finally puts out of court the possibility of the miraculous. What may happen under thinkable conditions is beyond even the scientific imagination.

The question is whether any conceivable explanation of life might justify an exceptional exercise of supreme power. Might such an exercise of power produce results of first-rate importance to the human race? If there is

any such theory of life, it ought to make us wary of denying what is inexplicable by natural law. Still more if the specifically Christian theory of life is united to such a theory, we have a case in defence of the wonder-working element in the New Testament.

That there is such a theory of life the whole history of Christendom sufficiently proves. For the belief in the human need for God, in the present sense of estrangement from God, is an integral portion of the gospel. It has left its mark upon the mind of the race. The thought of Europe, at least, has been affected in the deepest fashion by this body of doctrine.

What is the primary belief, the necessary presupposition, of the Christian faith? Surely that man is a spiritual being, not yet possessed of all the resources wrapped up in his own spirituality. That until man does thus become conscious of the spiritual forces stored within him, he cannot attain to the ideal generated in his own mind. To bring man into relation with the redemptive and sanative powers by which this is to be effected, is the main purpose of the gospel. Is that a task worth undertaking at all? If so, it is surely worth while using for its accomplishment the resources that are at the disposal of the Person who ventures upon it. There is to be One whose function it is to restore to man his original clearness of spiritual vision. He is to lead him to heights otherwise unattainable, whence he may see for himself the blessed land of the soul. Then it is not inconceivable that such a Person would be entrusted with unusual gifts and dowered beyond the ordinary man.

This is the central contention of the Christian believer. He maintains that there has come into the world such a Person, that He has performed precisely these functions. It seems eminently natural that He should be possessed of those exceptional gifts. They would qualify Him to arrest the attention and compel the allegiance of those

to whom He ministers. The believer is therefore not surprised that the central Figure of the New Testament moves in an atmosphere of the supernatural. He believes that in the works alone there may be found sufficient reason to accept Him as Lord.

It is granted that no evidence can prove the miraculous to one whose philosophy of the world implicitly denies it. No evidence that could be produced would affect that end. Is the miracle performed before his eyes? He would rather disbelieve the evidence of his senses than admit its feasibility. That cannot be done by one person which cannot be done by any other who knows the factors producing the miraculous result. Only to the man who has admitted the necessary presuppositions, can the claims of the miraculous in their most attenuated form ever make the slightest appeal.

It is clear, therefore, that the matter cannot be one of historic evidence alone. No amount of historic evidence could convince a man who had not first accepted the Christian idea of the world and of man that the miraculous act had been performed.

It will be admitted that the doer of the wonder works recorded in the New Testament is actuated by the highest motives. There is about the works of the Master a spirit of beneficence. Their intention is manifestly the enrichment of the soul of man. They have as their object the purging of the mind and the elevation of the whole nature. Hence an objection which may in general be urged against the miraculous falls to the ground. There is no appeal to the vulgar love of jugglery. The worker makes no attempt to create a credulity on which the magician may trade for his own benefit. The whole purpose of the works of the Master is evidently to aid a suffering and sinning humanity. He would have man ruler of his own faculties, the recognised monarch of his own vast spiritual resources.

Is it suggested that the larger portion of the gospel records is not historical? That is to acknowledge a greater miracle than can be credited to Jesus. It gives us no intelligible explanation of how the figure of Jesus Himself was created. The supposition that this beautiful and harmonious picture could be painted by accident will not serve. That it was designed by the co-operation of men whose intention was to deceive, will not bear investigation. Is it urged that we are dealing with material which has no historic foundation? Then we ask by what alchemy the figure of Jesus, which has entranced the imagination of the best men of twenty centuries, could have been fashioned. And there is no answer to the question. When Renan allows the barest authenticity for the Gospel records, as Sanday has pointed out, he admits the truth against which he has been so earnestly contending. For he cannot explain the figure of Jesus except as embodying divine truth or an egregious lie. And the ancient dilemma still holds good. There is that in Jesus which defies all the efforts of men to bring Him within the ordinary categories of humanity. His own startling claims must make us pause. The demand which He makes upon the allegiance of men is amazing. With what unruffled serenity He announces His world-shaking doctrine! How daring is His demand that the attention of the world should be focused upon Himself! And all this is combined with the deep humility which enables Him to wash the disciples' feet. He can accept the strokes of the lictors as part of His trial. He is willing to be the scorn of mankind, if He may thus convince men of His doctrine. These traits make up a Character which has justly enchained the affection of those who have been brought within the range of His influence.

Perhaps we are now escaping from the ruling disposition of the cheaply superior person to explain

everything great by reduction to its lowest terms. That habit has for too long governed our thought about divine things. Some one described the Hebrew prophets as nervously debilitated people. He thus applied that unsatisfactory system to some of the grandest characters of history. He also showed himself singularly unfitted to appreciate the genesis of moral greatness. It is one of the easiest solutions of the problem offered by extraordinary characters. But unhappily it explains nothing save the stupidity which would lead a man to go whaling with a trout rod. Epilepsy is not the only agent in the production of genius.

If there is a nobler interpretation of the facts of life or of history than the one that for the moment finds credence, I know of no reason why it should not be accepted. This is particularly true in the case of religion. For there it is easy to apply a vulgar explanation to the problem. We may so speedily discover a theory to satisfy the less worthy section of mankind, that we need to be on guard against this fruitful error.

The belief that Christianity is a revelation, is still not without reason on its side. The presuppositions which such a belief demands are, indeed, great. But they are not without justification. They imply that we believe in God as the living and supreme director of the universe. They suggest that we continue to place upon man the highest value of which he is conceivably capable. Such a revelation cannot be accomplished without a deliberate forethought on the part of the revealer. There must be a purpose behind the advent of the Person who brings to light this new series of truths. That purpose we see set forth in the words of the Master. It shines in His life as the lamp of His soul.

It is foolish to expect that the force which has been conserved by the gospel will remain at the service of humanity if the facts on which the theory of it has been

built are fallacious. There is no record of an ideal being maintained when the people have once understood that the ideal has no groundwork in reality. Men will not nourish in their bosoms what they have discovered to be an illusion. Those persons who imagine that after the historic Jesus has been destroyed, the world will still cherish the thought which grew up into beauty and power under the ægis of accepted truth, are cheating themselves with a lie. There is a logical instinct in the mind of the ordinary person. It is independent of any training of the schools. And this will lead him to dismiss to the land of forgotten stories and disproved theories a religion which has no foundation in the actualities of the past.

It is easy also to suggest that the origins of Christianity are to be attributed to the efforts of a number of insignificant men. But this is to misread the facts in such a manner as would be tolerated in no other connection. For no great work of art has ever been produced by the co-operation of a number of undistinguished characters. The cathedrals reared as monuments of man's genius and humility are, indeed, the result of combination on the part of many individual workers. But there has always been behind the mass of employed toilers the authoritative talent. This has already created the fairy structure in the chamber of the mind. He needs only the assistance of the skilled worker to complete his great design. It is still true that Wren built St. Paul's. The creator of St. Peter's is still to be found in the person of Brunelleschi or Michael Angelo. And the personal force behind Christianity is not disseminated through a number of unimportant individuals. It is generated first in the heart and will of Jesus Christ.

It is sometimes said that Jesus is an historical necessity, the inevitable product of nature's evolutionary forces. The great name of Hegel supports this theory. For him, Jesus is the consequence of a logical process in

history. But if Christ had been an historical necessity, there is no reason why there should not have been many Christs. Had it been imperative, a necessary event in the evolution of the species, that there should come into being the figure of Christ, there is no reason why that figure should have been confined to one sphere. That unique soul might have found more than one temple in which to abide. There have been many poets of the first order. The inventors of the world are not confined to one personal life. But we seek vainly for the precise counterpart of that sublime figure which lived in Galilee. We are not concerned with any general Christ idea. Our business is with this Christ, the man of Nazareth. And in Him we see, not simply a focus of historic time. We see the unveiling of God to man through a specially selected person.

It is well to remember the counsel of Aristotle. A man should not demand greater accuracy than the nature of the subject admits of. There is a sufficient degree of evidence to justify a reasonable man in accepting the faith of Christ as his own. With Dr. Johnson we could wish there were more. But it is not rational to demand an amount of evidence which is certainly not forthcoming in other departments of investigation.

Let it be recognised that the coming of Christ into the world means the creation of a new human species. That transplantation of the life of man from the outward to the inward, from the objective to the subjective, which has been effected by the influence of Christ, may well be described as a true regeneration of the human species. The effects of it are discernible in art. From the contentment, the almost animal satisfaction of the ancient world, the change has been made to a humanity which is avowedly discontented with life. Man asks for more from existence than even the fullest satisfaction of his material wants. From an instrument, capable of respond-

ing to all the touches of the sensuous world, man has become an artist. It is true that the process of artistic education is for him a long and bitter one. He is far, indeed, from having attained to anything like control over the energies placed at his disposal. But the prospect of development stretching before him is boundless. There is no limit to the moral culture of which he is capable. He has only begun the educative process which is to culminate in the fashioning of an ideal man. That his present condition, with its expression of wants unknown to his predecessors, with its insistence upon the needs of the spirit, upon the recognition of his diviner instincts, is an advance upon the placid satisfaction discernible in the statuesque calmness of Egypt or Greece admits of no dispute. This transformation we claim as the result of the coming of Jesus amongst men. It is not simply an unconscious and involuntary evolution. It is the direct contribution of Jesus to His theory of life. He has taught man to lift his eyes unto the hills from whence cometh his help. He has remained man that he cannot live by bread alone.

In reading Strindberg's story of his life one is impressed by his profound belief in the existence and operation of energies beyond the cognisance of our normal perceptions. He meditates upon those coincidences which seem to have happened in his life more frequently than in many others. He can find no explanation of them which does not acknowledge the existence of what he suggestively calls the Powers. As a man who has trained himself on the strictest mathematical methods he revolts against all the absurdities of this form of thinking. He sees what this admission of spiritual forces, benevolent or cruel, behind the veil of the world, seems to imply. He shrinks from confessing that there may be Agents of which his physical studies give him no indication. But the man cannot find rest until he has admitted that

there are such energies. It seems clear to him that they are influences affecting his own existence.

This is the revolt of the imaginative mind against that block universe which seems to William James so unsatisfactory. It means that men of vivid mind may carry their youthful impressionability into their years of maturity. If they do so they are not contented with that stolid world of observed fact which the Comtist believes to be alone worthy of our cognisance. And this spirit of discontent will grow. Men will again demand acknowledgment of those mysterious energies which lie at the back of human experience. The idea that man is to find nothing in the world but the reflection of his own face, leaves them disheartened. It may appeal with its message of resignation to those who have abandoned hope of any further discovery of truth.

But there are others who still look forward to the acquisition of a knowledge which transcends the bounds of the physical. These will be driven to seek unto the wizards, and to have recourse to evil spirits. They will indulge in table-rappings and the juggleries of necromancers. They will do anything, in short, rather than acknowledge that they are limited to that life of the body which in spirit they believe themselves to have already transcended.

There is a genuine need for a rebirth of this spirit of wonder. It is pitiable that men should have allowed it to be even partially destroyed. For without wonder and its corresponding sense of mystery, life becomes increasingly attenuated and mean. It shrinks to the narrow compass of a sty. The days of old no longer stir our blood. Voices that once were as bugle calls fall on deaf and unresponsive ears. The moonlit aisles of Melrose could thrill the soul of Scott with elevating thoughts and sweet imaginings. Tintern Abbey could move the spirit of Wordsworth to its deepest music. These solemn glories

of the past are to the sensitive spirit like winds blowing on hidden harp-strings. But to gain this, the habit of wonder must have been formed. That sense of awe, as though one heard the footfalls of the dead, adds a hallowed beauty to our human life. But it cannot live unless it be nourished by deep thoughts and sweet fancies.

We need this ability to marvel at the pageant of life, if we would prepare for the coming of unexpected and alluring adventures. In Elizabeth's spacious days the Englishman anticipated a daily miracle. Some galleon would come sailing out of the West. The mariner who had sailed in the eye of the sun would bring his tale of wonder for listening ears. Raleigh could make the stodgiest dullard feel the pulse of the world as he told of sunlit seas, of tempests black and terrible, of copper-coloured men, of mines in which rich gems were hid, of rivers running golden to the sea. The glory of the world lay all before these heralds of newly pierced continents and virgin seas.

That was a time when on the veriest hind there must have come some sense of the witchery of life. Bacon was opening new realms to the freshly liberated intellect. Shakespeare could speak his great language and feel no incongruity between majestic speech and simple men. For the world was new, and men stood on tiptoe to watch the daily marvel come over the sea's rim. Can we still feel that first fine foolish ardour? Do we now anticipate the revelation that every new day may bring to us? Or have we lost the ancient faith in the eternal newness of the world? Where is the fine frenzy with which men of a former time welcomed news from the other side of the world? The bones of our dead heroes are sepultured in ice near Polar seas. Beneath umbrageous shades in Central Africa many a daring traveller rests in his last long sleep. But how slight a

ripple on the surface of our minds the stories of these brave men leave! Our scientists have swept Ussher's chronology into the lumber-room. They have taught us to count the age of the earth with a millennium rather than a year as the unit. Lyell has made us realise the vastness of the past. Kelvin needs at least a hundred millions of years for the history of life on the globe. And his successors must multiply that figure by four if they are to give adequate time for biological development. We discuss the canals in Mars as if they had been engineered by de Lesseps. And yet these things do not move us to wonder. They have become stale as a Punch and Judy show. The moons of Jupiter are less impressive than a prize fight. Aviators tell us that the real attraction to a crowd is not the spectacle of a man mimicking the frigate bird, but the chance of seeing him broken to pulp after a fall of half a mile. These things may be disheartening to those who look for a constant improvement in the finer qualities of men. But they ought not to surprise us. For they are the natural consequence of a decline in spiritual vigour. View the world as a machine and it soon ceases to evoke the faculty of wonder. Think of men as animals, and they are just as dignified or contemptible as prize bulldogs or street curs. If, then, we would keep alive this child-like and beautiful habit of mind, we must once more capture the mood of Jesus. To Him all things are wonderful. The laughter of children, the melody of birds, the silence that is in the lonely hills and the moving multitudes of urban men are a diurnal miracle. For they serve as instruments for the utterance of God's speech. Is the world again to stir our pulses with its eternal recurrence of Spring and Autumn? Then we must learn again to see in it the vital movements of the Eternal Spirit. Thus we shall know that under the shadow of Mont Blanc, or, near to the turmoil of Charing

Cross, we are close to the beating heart of God. And that alone keeps wonder alive in man.

Blake tells us that life would be an endless bleeding were it not for poetry. He aspires to escape from reality by means of the shaping spirit of imagination. And thus he utters his protest against doctrines which would rob life of its glory by binding man down to the actual world in which his body dwells. The reaction against these is the true revolution of the spirit of man. It is directed against that stupidity which, according to Necker, mistakes the limits of its own view for the boundaries of the possible. And there is no such foe to this constricting tendency as the influence of Jesus upon the soul of man. Taken at the lowest valuation, He is first amongst "the scorers of the ground." Put Him, as Oscar Wilde would do, amongst the creative poets of the ages, and He stands above them all. For not one of them has inspired men to such a contempt for the boundaries of the feasible. He has taught us to believe in the infinite redemptions concealed in life. Doors opening upon the illimitable savannahs of the spirit have been unlocked by the son of Mary. He is the lord of those who see, even though the title be denied Him on higher ground.

And this justifies the claim we make for Him. He alone can keep alive in its full beauty the spirit of wonder in the world.

It is reported of one who, born blind, recovered his sight, that he said, "I often dreamed that I could see the world, but never imagined that it was as splendid as it is." That is the miracle which Jesus has worked in the souls of men. He has uncovered for them the cedar work that hid the gold and gems of the world's treasure from their eyes. They may have been crushed by the sense of life's greyness. But He has admitted them to those interior splendours which have always been existent, though to the bleared eyes and dulled faculties of men

they have been rendered almost invisible. The cottage has been turned into a cathedral, with lamps lit and the shrine ablaze. Amidst the drabness of our day there has stood the altar with its shewbread, its golden candlesticks, and the cherubims shadowing the Mercy-seat.

The pageant which the genius of Prospero evoked could stay only for a time. It blazed before the eyes of those who beheld it only to fade, leaving no wrack behind. But there is a world of inner glories, on which the eyes of men have been opened by the wizard's wand of Jesus. And that remains, inviolable as the most ancient heavens, more enduring than the stars.

CHAPTER IV

JESUS AND THE IDEA OF BEAUTY

PURITANISM has exercised a vast influence on the course of the world's life. That influence has been most profitable and effective in the realm of morals. It has done much to strengthen the ethical fibre of the race. Under its stern teaching the area controlled by the moral sentiments has been greatly enlarged. A certain sharpness of utterance has been given to the pronouncements of the conscience. Where formerly they were indefinite and uncertain, they have become precise and explicit. Ideas which were formerly vague, have been shaped into a clear if sometimes a hard form. The flexuous windings of the stream of desire have been banked and confined within boundaries. Many practices that were in another age permissible have been placed under the ban of religious and social reprobation. That this has been an important gain to the true interests of mankind most men will admit. Whatever may be our judgment on Puritanism, we cannot deny that it has been a mighty agent in the promotion of a keen ethical consciousness.

Yet the other side of the picture is not so encouraging. For the influence of Puritanism has not been conducive to the culture of the æsthetic emotions. It has enjoyed a radiant vision of that which Watts calls the "Dweller in the Innermost." But it has frequently ignored the existence of those lovely forms through which the Invisible may be made perceptible and palpable to the

sense of men. Seldom have the fine arts flourished under its sway. It has not been guilty of that desolating destruction with which its opponents have credited it. Yet it cannot be contended that it has really been a fertilising agent in the fields of beauty.

One striking exception to this must, of course, be made. For it is not to be forgotten that the genius of Milton flowered under the austere influence of Puritanism. *Comus* and *Lycidas* would still serve as ample proof that there is no necessary hostility between an ethical religion and the fairest fruits of artistic genius. But very rarely, indeed, is there such a combination of what Arnold called the Hebrew and Hellenic powers of man, as we see illustrated in the work of our great poet.

Yet the severity of tone found in Puritanism needs little apology. It requires none before those who are acquainted with the conditions amidst which it arose, and the moral desert in which it managed to flourish. It may yet be, unhappily, our duty to make again the choice which was forced upon the men of the Puritan era. And we should probably feel still, that it is better to sacrifice some of the beauty of the world, rather than surrender belief in the imperative nature of regulative ethics. The sensuous loveliness of life is part of the wealth of human inheritance. But we cannot balance even this against the austere beauty of truth and the authority of the illuminated conscience.

Happily, we have changed things since the time when men agreed that nothing good could come from those who loved beauty, who believed in the value of sweetness and light.

We do not now condemn the novelist as, from the nature of the case, an immoral person. It is seen that a man may have imagination and yet be capable of conformity with the conventions of his time and place in the world. All this is to the good.

Nor do we believe that the actor must be a frequenter of low pot-houses and a deep drinker of poisonous compounds, if he is to attain distinction in his profession. Indeed, it seems that we have swung to the other extreme, and are in peril of creating a new kind of idolatry. For we have members of this once much abused profession entering political life. They make for themselves a worthy place there. In the sacred gardens of Society they are to be met with as the spoiled favourites of a proud aristocracy. These things have produced no improvement in the quality of their work. Were it otherwise we should have the strongest argument for the maintenance of art workers in kings' palaces. But it has made them personally respectable. Yet the religious man still fails to take a healthy interest in the cause of beauty against ugliness. And this may produce discouragement almost too deep for words in those who still believe in a humanism inspired by religious motives.

It is alleged that no concord is possible between the realm of art and the world of pious opinion. The reason given is that there can be no art which does not demand contact with the evil elements of life. This is true ; and if regarded as a fatal argument, then the battle for art is already lost. But the argument is double-edged, and hurts more than it helps. For where is there an institution that is free from the peril of contamination by the world's evil forces? Life on these terms becomes impossible. We must put aside the notion that the good ought to be rejected because it is mingled with the bad. It can never be enjoyed and cultivated without some contact with the vileness of the world.

Can we guarantee that the precious pieties of the race are free from this pollution? They are especially the inheritance of the purest and the loftiest minds. But are they quite untainted by the evil with which they

have been blended throughout all time? On this supposition we must sacrifice the glory of the Church. For we cannot establish the assertion that the influences of the world have been unable to affect it.

Who would sincerely maintain that the Church has been untouched by the wickedness of the world? The whole of recorded history would laugh the suggestion out of court. Men know too well how the powers of earth and hell have affected the Christian community, to accept any such proposition. It is enough that the Church has existed in the world, to prove to all men who can think that it may have had relations with the baser elements of life. Reject, then, the fallacious doctrine that men can only touch art when art has been taken out of its natural environment and thus rendered innocuous to the unsophisticated mind. This system of thought would exclude from our libraries and art galleries nearly every work that merits the approval of the disciplined student. Let us by all means cultivate those things which are pure. But let us also see that our minds are cleared of falsehood and opened to the impressions of truth and soberness.

We rejoice to-day in the knowledge that the words of the great masters have not fallen upon inattentive ears. There are many signs that the world is not content with this veiled hostility between beauty and piety. Movement towards a harmony of interests is here the order of the day, and in that movement we ought to have our own part and lot. Can we not then look forward to a fresh form of thought and practice in this matter of the arts and religion? Once again the Church may be able to lay her sanctifying hand on the abundant blessings with which God has enriched mankind. Once more she may use them for the glory of God and the elevation of our race.

One of the most important contributions made by

religion to the world is the emphasis it has laid upon the ethical side of æsthetics. It has saved Art from becoming the cult of a few persons. It has protested against men feasting their eyes upon beauty, while the masses of mankind remain ignorant of the existence of things pure and lovely. If sometimes the ethical element has been forced to the front, to the obscuring of the purely sensuous appeal which beauty may make to the refined taste, it has not been without reason. We see this in the later work of Tolstoy and sometimes in that of Ruskin. The radical element embedded in the teachings of these men has been born and cradled in religion. And it can never be ignored with impunity by those who would connect art with those human wants and aspirations, by ministering to which it reaches the zenith of its upward movement. Religion is the corrective to the hunger for merely sensual beauty. It saves us from such frantic egotism as that of Huysmans when he says, "Life is worthless indeed, but for the privileged few there is art." For such men the millions of mankind must endure bondage to the claims of a worthless existence. But the elect are permitted to satisfy their hunger for beauty by the contemplation of artistic masterpieces. Here is the need for that saving grace of ethical piety which the gospel gives to men.

Let Wagner say that the world is only justifiable as an æsthetic phenomenon. We know how to measure the value of his words, when we bring them before the bar of a noble religion, when we put them beside the principles enunciated by Jesus. To eliminate the ideas of goodness, of sacrifice, of moral wholeness, is to surrender all those qualities by which the soul of man is maintained at a level above that of the brutes. To speak of the purpose which produced man as being no more than an appeal to our æsthetic perceptions, is to eject God from His throne. It is to turn our back upon the

mountains and the morning, and seek for the dark places where Circe changes men into swine.

Far more akin to the truth is Goethe's word, "Men are only creative in poetry and art when they have religion." The creator of *Faust* knew that great art must always find its genesis in some theory of the universe. It springs from some thought about man which does not permit the artist to regard him as a passive instrument in the hands of dæmonic powers. It compels him to conceive humanity as related to the highest of all, as engaged in fulfilling the will of an eternal goodness.

Puritanism has not failed to assist in this refining and ethicising process. It has shown men that life must be interpreted in terms of duty. For Puritanism the most important thing in the world is the knowledge of God's will, and the resolute attempt to get that will done on earth. If it has not been a productive power in the creation of supreme works of art, it has certainly saved its adherents from malignant delusions. It has been the antidote to influences which would have poisoned the springs of artistic impulse. But not even the Puritan can now deny the importance of art to a full and worthy human life. We may adopt the pose of the pure barbarian, so frequently disguised as a respectable citizen, and maintain that since we can neither eat nor drink pictures and poems we need not be disturbed about them. Yet it remains true that people find enjoyment in the contemplation of beautiful things. They believe that they derive profit from them as well. Hugo was probably right when he said that there is nothing beautiful which is not also essentially useful. The Philistines are not to be the last arbiters of taste. There are some things necessary which cannot be converted into cash. If this is not so, some of us will be obliged to seek elsewhere for a tolerable world.

It is assuredly not necessary to join the happy band of gentry who imagine that the wearing of unfashionable attire and the cultivation of Bohemian habits, is the preliminary training needed by the lover of the beautiful. Happily the fantastic world that Murger revealed to us no longer exists, save as a pale shade of what it was once reputed to be. It seems increasingly possible for a man to have a streak of genius in him without necessarily living and looking like a born fool.

Eggs and bacon on the table at mid-day might well sicken Meredith of the society even of Rossetti. That gifted artist would have been much more likely to achieve real greatness, if he had declined to live by his idiotic rule of "never doing anything he did not like."

Many of us who accept Jesus as our leader are now laying to heart the words of Renan. We believe with him that "the system in which the Venus of Milo is but an idol, is false or at best partial." That judgment which severs the Christian from all communion with the lovely things produced by the genius of man must be dissociated from Christianity. Only thus can the religion of Jesus win the allegiance of future generations. We do not deny the immense services rendered to the world by the astringent properties found in the ascetic theory of life. But we shall be compelled, in defence of the faith, to repudiate every effort to bind the Christian to a refusal of the beauty that comes through human hands from the mind of God. The men and women of the new generation must be even more daring in this matter than they have been. Instead of cultivating a covert admiration for the art works of the world, they must proclaim their intention to enjoy every form of beauty as a part of the heritage of life. When Solon heard one of Sappho's poems he prayed that he might not die until he had learned it. There is no reason why the same intense affection for beauty should not flourish in the

breast of the modern Christian. Indeed, it may be that he has even more justification for a reverential attitude towards the lovely things of the world. For his judgment of the meaning of life is deeper and more sacramental than that of the old Ionian.

Spiritual individualism is a notable characteristic of the Christian faith. And this should tend to a more personal appreciation of art work than was possible under the régime of the ancient faith. Lycurgus is said to have killed the arts in Sparta by his repression of the individual. Every substitution of the State for the family, every effort to annihilate natural egoism without providing a personal object of adoration, must act as a withering blight upon all artistic impulse. Good art must represent a personal view of things. We are interested in it because we feel that the thing seen was like this. We may not see the same landscape, or find the same delicate lines in a countenance, since we have not a similar outlook. But it is interesting to us because one man with clear eyes has reported truly the vision granted to him. The religion of Jesus has increased the worth of the individual. Therefore it ought to provide us with the finest examples of an art which comes as the expression of the personal thought of its creator.

The antithesis to the true appreciation of beauty by the Christian is found in Bunyan's dread of the church bell as a temptation of the devil. Because its gentle music touched his soul to finer issues and gave to him a moment's surcease from his penetrating self-scrutiny, he must look upon it as an enticement from the Prince of Evil. That condition of mind has been deeply prejudicial to the interests of Christianity amongst men. It has cut them off from the enjoyment of many things perfectly innocent. It has raised doubts amongst the more intelligent as to the right of any faith to sever man

from his surroundings in this sharp fashion, and deprive him of the enjoyment of beauty.

There is little justification for this in the words of the Founder. It is true that He did not place the merely beautiful in the forefront of His teaching about life. He saw too clearly the presence of the grotesque and ugly elements in existence to imagine that life could be summarised in terms of beauty alone.

It has remained for the modern optimist, with his carefully prepared seclusion from contact with the coarser elements of life, to develop the fanciful doctrine that the whole universe may be regarded as a garden of flowers, and life as a perpetual "March to Cytherea." But though Jesus never ignored the black shadows on life's canvas, He was not less careful to give its legitimate importance to the element of loveliness in the world. The lilies in the furrowed field were to Him the symbol of a beauty which was rooted in the very heart of life. Only out of a deep inner loveliness could there come a beauty so exquisitely pure as that which could put the glory of Solomon to shame.

The representatives of an ascetic Christianity would have done well to remember those words of Hobbes: "Men should not be too rash in condemning any means which nature devises to save them from themselves." It is easy to despise these aids to deliverance. But a wiser judgment of life will declare that the least of them may not be without its value in the scheme of things. Art has had an immense influence in the development of the finer forces of life. The manner in which beauty has affected men to good ends will never be allowed to slip entirely from the memory of men. Is it not written that the hordes of Attila, seeing the almost divine loveliness of Pallas, refrained from plundering the city? Great, indeed, is the enthralling and rebuking power of sheer beauty. The marble coldness of those cheeks,

the frigid loveliness of that ideal form, will compel even the coarser-minded crowd to remember that there are sanctuaries into which the profane foot must not venture. Who will say that a form of labour, which can by its results produce such changes in the life of man, can be ignored by religion? It has been one of the driving powers in the world's movement. Can the religious man permit it to sink into oblivion, or be blotted from the range of human interest?

How, then, shall we judge art? Is there any rule by which the nobly beautiful can be separated from its baser imitation? On what grounds shall we reject the beautiful which attracts by its immediate appeal, but lacks the elements of a higher loveliness? Shall we say, with Spencer, that all art work is simply a form of play, implying that whatever exercise is at once easy and pleasurable ought to result in beauty? This seems to be hardly a sufficiently dignified position for the art worker. He may justly be discontented with the position of one who acts as the amuser of the world. There must be some distinction between the singer of a comic song and the composer of an oratorio.

Is it to be said that all beauty depends upon the projection of inner experience into the forms that are seen? This theory of empathy seems at present to be popular with æsthetic writers. But surely the idea of the beautiful can hardly be so recondite as this would make it. There ought to be some simpler means by which we can judge of the beautiful. Tolerably effective guidance should be found without perplexing our brains with problems of pure æsthetics.

Shall we adopt the idea that whatever is in its total condition favourable to life is in the result pleasurable? This seems to give one a working theory. But then it will be necessary to be on our guard against a low and false exposition of the meaning of the term life. If the

implication is that whatever helps the sense of richer physical life must be profitable and pleasurable, the answer must be a denial. For the cannibal would tell us that his enjoyment is based upon this idea of an effect upon his own life, however prejudicial it might be to the life of the person who served as material for the feast.

Here is where Jesus gives to men the guiding principle they need. His followers also believe that beauty must consist in elements favourable to life. But they make the term life hold a richer content than is customary with men of the world. They are not satisfied with a use of the word which would make it consist of a series of sensuous impressions. There is, in their judgment, a permanent element in life which must be acknowledged. This persisting essence demands recognition in all departments. And in none is its claim more forceful than in the realm of the beautiful. The theory of the beautiful which neglects the existence of soul is condemned out of its own mouth. To say that any particular collocation of lines and colours is to be regarded as beautiful when it conveys no appeal to the higher faculties of men, is to rob art of all its grandeur. You thus make it the crude and silly servant of animal desires.

That is why men feel the truth in that ascetic theory of Tolstoy's which would make the value of art depend upon the creation of human sympathy. This may be deemed too exclusive a theory. The doctrine which condemns much of the work of Wagner and Beethoven seems like a defiance to common sense. It suggests an undue elevation of the multitude to a position they cannot claim. Yet it is at least an improvement upon the aristocratic doctrine that would make all artistic enjoyment the prerogative of a select and expensively-educated class. The theory that can make George Selwyn a master to be admired, stands self-condemned in the court

of reason. If the lovely things of the world are to be enjoyed only by the few, art is not worthy the service of a great soul. If the many must toil without hope of relief from their labour, with no gleam of colour coming into their lives save through the medium of a street song, then our civilisation is worthy of Hinton's condemnation. The first thing to do is to turn it upside down and rectify the mistakes we have made.

And Jesus saves us, by this demand for spiritual content in all beautiful things, from the exaggeration of form at the expense of meaning. This has usually accompanied the decadence of any particular art. Men may think seriously of style, and little of what the writer has to say. The important thing may be the mode of expression, the matter of secondary gravity. Then we recognise the signs of artistic senility and decay. That was the false view of art which animated Watteau even on his deathbed. He turned away from the ivory crucifix that the priest held out to him, complaining that it was badly carved. Poor, silly creature, who in the moment of his dissolution could not get behind the representation, the mere external figuring of the thing, to its infinite depth of meaning. Yet any crucifix of rough hewn wood will convey that meaning to the awakened soul as eloquently as the carver's finest work. What a life of shallow and superficial thought: a continual skating upon the mere surface of things is suggested by that petulant exclamation of a dying man! That religion must be healthy in its influence upon men which will save us from such blunders. It will not permit us to be foolish adorers of wood and stone, while we forget the Divine truth the poor effigy is intended to set forth.

This submission to the mind of Jesus in relation to the beautiful will deliver men from a disposition to maudlin sentiment. He has no commendation for the emotions which leave the conscience untouched and the

conduct unchanged. Let Sterne pip and whine over a dead ass, and then forget his duty to a living mother. Let Rousseau prance before Europe as the "Man of Feeling" while his children become the wards of a State and the beneficiaries of a foundling hospital. Let Strindberg fill the ear of the world with gushing lamentations over his own sufferings while he wrecks the lives of women who have trusted him. This is the hoary custom of the sentimentalist of purest breed. He is never satisfied unless he has an audience watching his dramatic exhibitions of lachrymose emotions.

No remedy for this inveterate habit can be found like that acerbity of moral criticism which Jesus brings to bear upon the life of the man of words. The chattering crowd of those who carry their hearts upon their sleeve receives scant courtesy at His hands. He knows the running wounds of humanity too well to be concerned with the moaning crowd of melancholy tricksters who play upon our sensitive pulses.

It may then be said of all art, as Mr. Walkley has said of drama, that its purpose is to reveal nature. But the function of religion is to control nature. Yet it would be a misreading of the facts to believe that there is a necessary conflict between these two tendencies. That art which does not select must end in beastliness. It may take as its subject the swarming streets of Paris, as did Zola. It may paint every variety of human deformity and obscenity, under the plea that these things exist. Yet the result is not only a denial of religion, but a repudiation of the sanity of life. The post-impressionist who gives us Fijian women with all their repulsive features accentuated, and the normal lines of the human figure dwarfed or exaggerated out of all semblance to reality, may think that he is painting things as they are. He is really revealing his depraved predilection for the hideous.

How, then, can we dispense with such an influence as this of Jesus? In the midst of the modern chaos of opinion He stands for the sweetly beautiful elements in life. There is no literature which is not all the better for being brought under the control of a sanity so fresh and clean in all its judgments as that which we find in the mind of Christ. He delivers us from the frantic stupidity of the rose-water optimist, with his perfumed sachet—for the nauseous odours of reality. He saves us equally from the dolorous gloom which would make the civilised world into a subterranean coal-bin. He proclaims a doctrine of Selection to man which is not merely natural. It is indeed supernatural, since it makes hallowed intelligence the final judge.

Mediævalism, says Renan, gave to mankind the sense of the infinite. Why attribute to a particular era of Christianity what is the peculiar gift of Christianity to the world? This is what the gospel has brought to men. It has surrounded man with a spiritual energy more impressive than any diffusion of the atmosphere through unimaginable spaces. It has set him in the centre of a flux which pours from the illimitable past, and surges on to unattainable shores. It has clothed him in the garment of mystery, and, in so doing, has crowned him with glory and honour.

It is this creature of the deeps and the heights, in touch with more worlds than one, who speaks, in Luther's phrase, so finely courageous—"I accept joy now wherever I can find it." For only out of the recognition of those abysses which encircle us can we evoke the pure carol of a genuine joy. Then we feel that we stand on the brink of unknown worlds. At any hour the sweeping ascent to larger realms may commence. Every moment is but one in a succession so vast that its ends are lost in the infinite. This is to hold the ground from which joy in its perfect form can spring.

Let the flippant dancers of the world, who know no other god than he of the wine barrel and the vine, brag if they will of the delight which comes in the mere living. There is a deeper joy. It can only be known by those who have looked with solemn eyes upon the darkness that skirts the frontiers of our life, and have discerned there, palely gleaming, a star, like that of Bethlehem.

For the old gods can no longer satisfy a soul awakened into life by the Master of men. There are needs not to be met by anything short of what He alone can give. That deification of a bland and benignant nature was easy to the denizens of Grecian lands. Upon them all the sweet blooms of life seemed to have been poured from the full hands of Flora. To them Ceres had given richly of her oil and wine. But the Gothic temper knows another form of nature. It therefore seeks an interpretation of her doings which will at least acknowledge the existence of those severities in her countenance, those veiled claws beneath her ample breast, that we have learned to know so well. Full of significance is that sentence of Pater's, that "Dionysius becomes melancholy when he passes from the country of the grape to the town where there is squalor and woe." It is in the sunny, open lands that the religion of the cup and the dance can flourish. But what has he for those who have tasted the wormwood in life's wine? What does he give to those who know the constricting limits of repulsive tasks, and the drear monotony of sunless days? Alas! he has no word that can bring the rose back to the pallid cheek of care. Behold the truth as it has been confessed by unwilling lips. Even the religions which repudiate Sorrow, which deny the efficacy of tears, must confess that the laughter which is not rooted in pathos becomes, at last, as the crackling of thorns under a pot.

Many of us have learned that only by an intimate

knowledge of the gloomy side of life could we be prepared for the recognition of the divinely beautiful when at last it did appear.

The reaction against the darkness of our lot will often qualify us for the recognition of that which we might otherwise have passed by in scorn. Yvette Guilbert has told us how God revealed Himself to her in beauty when she learned that she could sing. The merciless poverty that had crushed her soul was changed under the radiance of this newborn hope into a beneficent and salutary discipline. The music which began to make itself heard in her brain was to be interpreted through her delicate art to the world. In that prospect she could continue to live, and find life a benefaction.

This is the element in which religion moves with perfect freedom. That garish gaiety which has no undertone of sadness can hardly speak to the expectant spirit of man. But there is that in the words of Jesus, in the judgment on life He enables men to make, in the rippling gladness He imparts to those who follow Him and obey His word, which will make them capable of finding beauty where else it had been for ever hidden from their eyes.

How, then, can we afford to dispense with His presence and authority in the realm of the beautiful? The æsthetics which does not recognise His message is bound to be incomplete. It is irrational to treat the problems of art and life as if He had never spoken. Such theorists twist the rope by which they hang themselves. They prepare, with their large but meaningless phrases, the grave in which their dead ideas will finally repose.

CHAPTER V

JESUS AND HUMAN AFFECTIONS

WE read that Archilochus visited Sparta, but was not allowed to remain there an hour, for the City Fathers judged that he would corrupt the people. It seemed good to the guardians of that ancient State to protect their citizens from the peril of moral contamination. In pursuance of that policy they did not hesitate to banish an important person from their land.

We have certainly changed all that. For not the boldest of statesmen would now dare to publicly ostracise a man on grounds of moral corruption. He would be recognised as merely different from his fellows. It would be impertinent to suggest that he might exert an unwholesome influence upon them. And, truly, one would rather have it so. That cloistered virtue which has never breathed the free air of the world, is not of much importance in the sharp conflicts between good and evil. One of the merits of Freedom is that even when she has produced disease she can apply a remedy to the wounds she has caused. There are many agencies working on behalf of moral corruption. But the most effectual guard against them is the strength bred by a rational liberty. No more will men be content with a selected nourishment, supplied to them by their rulers. They have arrived at a further stage in their evolution. They are resolutely bent on selecting their own dietary, and the best that the lover of his kind can do is to offer sugges-

tions for their guidance. It is here that the Christian Church may claim to exercise an important function. For she has in her keeping a treasure which is of priceless value as a moral cathartic. It is more important than all others in the world. Whatever may be the continual disputes about the person of our Lord, there can be no doubt about the manner in which He has touched the conscience of mankind. He has aroused an interest in the questions which lie at the root of all serious thinking. For most of the men who have thought about these matters there is now only one alternative. Either the ideas of Jesus about life are correct, or else there has been no revelation of the will of God. If the latter is true, then man is simply a blind worm struggling upwards. He thinks it may be towards the light, but it is just as likely to prove a Stygian darkness and a cold as of Arctic seas. Nothing, therefore, can be more important than this—that men should know what the presence of Christ as a teacher really means. For only when they understand His purpose, and gain an insight into His method, can they judge correctly His claims to their allegiance.

It has been well said that when the Master honours the lowly roof none can doubt that He is in residence. There is nothing so immediately self-revelatory as the presence of Christ in the life of an individual or community. We do not mean, Heaven forbid! any intonation of affected speech or trick of manner. This may be imitated from those to whom perhaps it was not unnatural. It is not to be accepted as a sign that the life is regulated by Christ from within. Precisely because this deep religion of the inward life is so fair a thing and, at its best, such a mighty agency for good, does it lend itself so easily to the mimicry of the clever trickster. It becomes the favourite ground for the jugglery of men who play with truths as with billiard balls. For it is

the really valuable things of the world which permit of mimicry. They are the chosen instruments of those who, having no reverence for beauty and truth, are anxious only to catch the applauses of the crowd. It is hardly worth the counterfeiter's while to spend his time in imitating the copper coin which forms the currency of the poor. He would rather mould the sovereign or the ducat, if he can, and foist his base gold upon those who deal with money in large sums. Had Christianity not been a religion of importance there would have been no copies of it. But for those qualities which make it unique, those features which are of transcendent beauty, there would have been no effort to manufacture the cheap and glittering imitation of it which may obtain credence amongst men. And it is in the highest forms of this religion, in those virtues which, when actually in being, offer the most beautiful of all spectacles, that the cheat finds his easiest task, and come most swiftly upon his prey.

What is it that we need most in the world? No system of organisation is sufficient to meet the needs of men. Admirable as are the fruits of a wise direction of intelligence in this connection, there are other elements essential to a transformation of unsatisfactory conditions. It is the judgment of Meredith that only by the enlargement of cerebral capacity can man achieve permanent conquests. By the tightening up of intellectual energies and their concentration upon the facts of human life, the position of man will be continually improved. This is the belief of a large section of those most interested in the future prosperity of humanity. They are not ignorant of the unnecessary suffering caused by the sheer stupidity of men. They know that there is a hardness of heart which can be indifferent to the claims of the wretched, if only the unfortunates are sufficiently far away. And this is the chief cause of the indignation

good men feel as they watch the anguish of earth's disinherited children.

The cry is still for the wisdom which shall make much of this human pain for ever impossible. And yet the real need of men never has been definable in these terms alone. The happiest of men are not those who are gifted with prevision. They are not always those who can foresee dangers and take the necessary precautions. There is probably more simple human joy amongst the careless peasantry of Italy, or amongst those who throng the sunny streets of Naples, than we can find amongst any of the world's successful workers. They are not distinguished for their provident outlook upon life. Their poverty is a byword. Their habits are detestable to the majority of clean-living Englishmen. But many of them have solved the problem of how to be happy more successfully than many a plutocrat with the wealth of the world at his command. Not that we need envy their happiness or copy the manner in which they set about attaining it. For what they lose is probably according to a truer scale of values of more importance than what they gain. But we do ill in forgetting that the possession of qualities which are admirable in the eyes of modern men are not necessarily the source of unalloyed happiness. No, what men need in the highest degree is a renewal of the sympathy that springs from love. For this enables them to recognise in their fellow-men the bearers of a burden as heavy as their own. The fountains which need renewal are not exclusively intellectual. They are the springs whence flow those moral energies which have always been the most potent forces in the management of the world. There is perhaps no more insidious peril menacing the world to-day than the disposition to view humanity and its relations in the light of a pure intellectualism. The notion that the value to the State of any person is to be conditioned solely by his brain

power, is as pernicious in politics as it is fatal in religion. Some of the most cruel oppressors of humanity have been those who had all the mental equipment that could be desired. But they were defective in those elements which move men to affection and passionate devotion. The diplomatists of the world have been trying to cheat each other for generations. They have played with human lives as with pawns. Gortschakoff and Talleyrand were not lacking in those intellectual qualities which are credited with the salvation of humanity. The skill of Metternich in the subtleties of diplomatic intrigue became a byword even in that age of tortuous policy. Yet it is doubtful if any citizen of their respective countries did more harm to his nation than each of these men. It should have dawned upon their imagination that the real need of humanity and of their own land was a deeper consideration of the position of the average man. Then they might have left behind them a name which would not have been execrated by every lover of his kind.

That the diplomat and the soldier, the financier and the master of industry, have each their respective spheres of labour, who would deny? But that the ultimate welfare of any people is calculable in terms of intellect alone, only a fanatic could be induced to admit. The ground of our happiness is after all to be found in certain simple sentiments which need nourishment and free play for their operation. Let the masses of the people be animated by a spirit of solicitude for the common welfare. Set them free from the tyranny of governments which will persist in decreeing how they shall employ themselves. Give them liberty to work out their own salvation, free from the rapacity of the cruel and the overwhelming weight of the strong. There will then be no need to seek in some fabled land for the secret of human felicity. It may be found at the door of the

cottager. It waits in the smiles of his children to greet the returning artisan.

The pressing need at present is for the rediscovery of the power of religion. For only religion can make these simplicities of life the property of all. The question whether the conquests of science and the arrangements of statesmen have accomplished much for the true betterment of human conditions may still be a matter of dispute, as it was in the days of Mill. There are many who, believing that we have gained much from these labours, yet doubt whether we have obtained anything like the heritage we ought to have received. That the general outlook of men upon life, at least amongst those who think, is more deeply tinged with melancholy than it used to be, the literature of the time tells us in unmistakable terms.

We need, then, some ideal Person towards whom these gentle affections of the heart can be directed, under whose sway they may continue to grow. There is a love which sheds a radiance over the life of the simple toiler of the fields. It comes like sunshine into his narrow world and opens for him magic casements upon the foam. This alone can act as the antidote to an intellectualism which must produce a revival of ancient inequalities. Some one is required who will assure us that we are right in choosing the simple and easily attainable elements of human happiness. He must teach us that in the love of children, the quiet practice of industry, we may find a contentment beyond the assaults of a clamorous world. And who can accomplish this divine work in our hearts but Jesus of Nazareth? Vaulting ambition would lead us to despise life as we know it, and to pass our days in moaning, since we cannot find better bread than is made from wheat. He calls us back to the field and the stream, to the cottage and the common road, and reminds us that there He found the happiness of life, until a

higher duty drove Him forth to death. To our wild impatience He offers the soothing balm of His gentle words. Through the love He evokes in us for Himself He prepares us to entertain and cherish those gracious human affections which offer the sweetest mitigations to our earthly lot. No man need quarrel with his fate on the ground of his inadequate intellectual dower, who has learned to see in the Son of Man the Brother of his soul.

CHAPTER VI

JESUS AND THE CHILD

WHAT is the relation of Jesus to the child life of the race? We have means of judging what it has been in the past. We may easily discern what it is in the present. Are we satisfied with what it promises to be in the future?

It is admitted that children require some form of religious culture. Even those persons who are most hostile to the accepted creeds of Christendom acknowledge that this is desirable. No sensible man wishes to see his children growing up in ignorance of every form of religious truth. The melancholy experience of John Mill shows the wisdom of this. Many of those who have rejected all public profession of religion, prefer that their children should be trained in the faith of the Church.

There are many reasons for this. Such men are aware of strange ties binding them to their human kindred. Many associations link them to the men and women who in former generations have acknowledged Christ. Such men do not wish to be separated entirely from mental communion with their historic predecessors. Nor can they view without regret the prospect of such a complete severance for their children. They do not welcome the thought that the next generation will have been cut off from the entail of faith. After all, it is something to feel that we are linked to humanity by more than natural affections. The little

round of life is of small value if we are to feel at the end that with the mass of humanity we have no sympathy. Who would choose to lie in a lonely grave? Who wishes to feel himself sundered from his race even in the coldness and insentience of death? That was not a base ambition which led Warren Hastings to dream of a recovered Daylesford. And when the resting-place of England's heroes was closed to him, his perturbed spirit might still find repose in the ancient homestead of his race. Some such honourable sentiment moves men who would not have their offspring utterly divorced from the religion of their fathers. It is, then, not an untimely question to ask, What shall be the religion of the new generation? Many of us cannot view without dismay the prospect of a continuance of the present system. We watch with sorrow the estrangement between the judgment of the parent and the nascent soul of the child. Far from promising for the future is the habit of leaving the young mind to grow up without any bias towards religious belief. Experience shows too clearly the consequences of that system. To be indifferent is almost equivalent to being hostile. The attitude of the impartial student is difficult to maintain. When the mind is fed on nothing, it becomes a victim to every crude deception which may cross its path. A generation trained in everything but religion is not likely to cherish high thoughts of the claims made by any form of belief. Respect for its teachers will certainly depart. Homage to its outward trappings may still be paid as a courtesy offered to the senility of dotage. But the suggestion that a conception of life so alien from ordinary experience should affect the making of conduct will be greeted with derision.

And already we may perceive some of the results of the neglect of religion in our thought of the child. The claims of children upon our respect are being soberly questioned. Practices which have disgraced the worst

ages of barbarism are now being discussed as possibilities of a new era. An intelligent writer, Mr. Isaacson, discusses the new application of the Malthusian law. He tells us that some of the inferences of this law are now being debated in advanced circles. One of these inferences is the removal of the superfluous population. The abundance of female children and the consequent disproportion between the sexes is to be rectified by effective, if not sanguinary, methods. It has long been known that the Chinese may drown their female children. It remains for us to adopt the practice, and so improve upon the foolish habits of our ancestors.

It is not only to children that this decisive system of judgment will be applied. We learn that Lombroso had a rapid method of decreeing the future destiny of the candidates whom he examined. By the use of purely physical criteria he would adjudge their future prospects. Looking at the contour of the countenance or the shape of the skull, he would draw inferences therefrom as to the possible destiny of the youthful student. The chance of a death on the gallows would be broadly hinted to the unfortunate victim of the famous criminologist. A mild suggestion that a strait-jacket and water gruel would be appropriate treatment for his case would greet the aspiring pupil. And this would be done on such unimpeachable authority as the prognathous character of his jaw, or the fact that he belonged to the long-headed rather than the broad-headed section of humanity. Human beings are to be judged by the same tests as the buyer might apply in the purchase of an Irish hunter.

It is on some such theory that a sensible man can suggest the removal of undesired offspring. They are to be valued as one appraises the worth of kittens. Their extinction is no more serious than the destruction of a rabbit's progeny.

In the wilds of Africa they have long since brought

to perfection this method of treating the young generation. In that delightful land, if the baby should not teethe correctly, the unfortunate youngling is swung from the father's hand into the middle of the nearest river. These people have escaped the virus of paternal sentiment. They may be regarded as representing the higher ranges of modern culture. Uniformity of stature may not be attainable, but at least they will guarantee a dental similarity. The passion for individuation—that foolish habit of our good and stupid Mother Earth, which leads her to give distinction to each of her children—receives scant mercy at the hands of these noble barbarians. And, after all, why should we allow this process of selection to be restricted to our molars and incisors? Why not apply it to all the organs of the body. Let it be understood that every short-legged baby is to be cast out of the land of the living. Shall we not have a standard example, just as we have a fixed gauge of the pound-weight or the yard-measure? And let it be known that the miserable weaklings who are unable to attain to this measurement are destined to the nearest lethal chamber. Then we shall have some promise of that uniformity in the human body so earnestly desired by our modern representatives. We will not be guilty of the cruelty of those Portuguese gentlemen of the Putumayo, who secure the foundations of their houses by jamming children alive into the holes dug for the corner-posts. Not for us the bad custom of those Dahomeyan kings who have paved their halls of sacrifice with the skulls of the dead. Those are practices which must move a tender heart to compassion, and would receive no commendation from well-bred men. We men of to-day, who have invented a special machine for the breaking of a dog's vertebræ, that the movements of the spinal cord may be inspected in the living beast, are too sympathetic to endure these crude fashions of

our copper-coloured or ebony brother. We merely determine that people living in this world must be healthy. The pugilist and the football player will be our unchangeable exemplar. Physical deformity and bodily disability must be made impossible. The eye of the artist shall no longer be offended by the presence of the paralytic. It is true that we have read of blind Fawcett making himself into a respectable member of that Senate where meets the concentrated wisdom of the planet. Our fathers have told us the story of bold Kavanagh, the man who rode to hounds with the best of them, although Nature had cheated him of arms and legs. Measly sentimentalists may still talk about the evolution of a soul in the amorphous body of Helen Keller. But the decree will have gone forth that the weaklings of the world must be eliminated from the dusty globe, disfigured by their presence. And when we think of the Progress of the species, what does it matter whether we lose a few more or less of the squinting, rickety brats who flounder and paddle in the filthy gutters of the world?

"A child has been born to me, a fetter has been forged for me," is the lamentation of the holy Buddha. This is certainly different from the "Increase and multiply" of the bold adventurers who tramped across the desert towards a Canaan of the blest. There is here no shallow optimism, such as breathes in the improvident utterance of the holy harpist. He sang of a child as the arrow of a mighty man, and thought him blessed who had his quiver full of them. Still further are we from Him who spoke of them as images of the heavenly kingdom. They are fetters binding us to the hateful earth. Their antenatal culture spoils the figure of the dainty creatures who have waltzed with us through life's ball-room. Their nutrition from the living fountain may be eugenically desirable. But it may call the admired of many men away from the atmosphere of adulation and

subtly dubious flattery to the greasy insipidities of the cradle and the cot. Even the bravest man can hardly escape from that philosophy which regards them as hostages to fortune. Their advent into his charmed circle may spell a reduction of that proportion of his income which ought to go in billiards and petrol, in golf and opera stalls. He also may say with the unearthly Buddha, that fetters are being forged for him. There are many pretty stories in the world, of children ravished by eagles from their cradle, and then restored by bold peasants to their wailing mother. But, under the régime of a theory which teaches us that each child is but a fetter, their rape by beast or bird must be regarded as the lucky breaking of a shackle.

Would we escape from the palsy produced by this jaundiced view of life? Do we ask for deliverance from these frosty calculators, who would manufacture a new human race by limiting the generation of life to one type? Then we must recapture that fervent belief in the goodness of life breathed in the words of Jesus. We must again look on the newborn child as the choicest of God's treasures. Our efforts to mould the world after our chosen pattern must cease when we reach the sources of being. Again the ancient doctrine must be taught and believed, that children are an heritage of the Lord. Alter, if you will, the modes by which life, once given, is nourished and maintained. Give what form is most suitable to those institutions amidst which the new life must have its being. These are not sacrosanct. Men made them, and may unmake them if they will. But let us cease from these tricks of the player who wants to hold all the trump cards against God. The jokes of superficial witlings persist in making the father of children look ridiculous. They should be banned by a censorship which needs no support beyond the propulsive force of a well-shod foot. The japes of a comedian whose wit

must be sharpened on these time-worn themes should be frozen at the source. For common sense shows that men need no inducement to refrain from vital obligations. Let the futile persons who have not courage to undertake the maintenance of a wife keep their cackle to themselves. The black-visaged toiler who has not jibbed before life's most sacred privilege is worth a dozen of them.

Once more we must make a religious education possible for the new generation. The men of this country have stood by in disgusted silence, while the education of their children has been made a theme for the delivery of political harangues. It has become the strategic point around which Parliamentary forces have been manœuvred, in imitation of military evolutions by the famous Duke of York. It is high time that the truth was recognised in this connection. It is not now a debate between Nonconformist and Anglican. The question is whether there is any likelihood of the Christian religion being even heard of by the new generation, unless the tactics of both parties are altered. Some of our Nonconformist brethren are afraid that the priest will obtain a footing in these islands once more. Better the frocked priest than the irreligious politician as the tutor of our children. A Godless childhood is a festering source of disease to poison the life of unborn millions. It is a bitter cruelty of which no man should be guilty. To inflict it on a whole nation is an offence against Heaven. What may be even more important to us, it is a dereliction from the stern rule of nature. For there is no place in the sun's rays, at least for any considerable period, for those who have failed to conceive the world in terms of reverence. Life will not yield its fairest gifts to those who have contumaciously ignored the rich endowments of the spirit.

Of one thing we may all be certain, the time has gone when our offspring must needs be instructed in

the mystery of Churchmanship. If the Anglican priest has nothing better to give to the teeth of the new generation than these dry bones of ecclesiastical nomenclature, he will find a constantly diminishing number of candidates for his barren charity. And we Nonconformists must not offer to the palate of our successors a crisply carved theological system, hanging, like the prophet's coffin, 'twixt earth and heaven. Banish your chatter about Churchmanship, and speak to the children of religion. Cease, O Dissenter, from your dallying with catechisms, whether of the milk-and-water or the ruddy-beef brand, and let the new race learn once more to know the language of the Bible. Is it true that the cassocked curate is eager to proclaim the mysteries of religion to the apathetic ears of underfed scholars? Suffer him to continue the good work without let or hindrance. It may be that through his twitterings there may dribble some thin stream of truth into the half-sutured skulls of his auditors. At least, they are not likely to accept too much of his doctrine as inspired. The influences of home and playground, the dubious education of street and alley, will prevent the youth of our time from becoming images of frigid holiness. What matter the source of the healing stream if only it will do its remedial work? John Knox would find plenty to occupy his mind to-day, if he were here to tackle this question of the culture of our children. They tell us that a thousand years before Knox began his beneficent labours, Columba was engaged in educating the infants of his own generation. In our time we could do with them both. For we need every soldier who will aid us to stem the invasion of a pretentious ignorance, which would expatriate the spiritual from the world's best life.

And we need not despair of the result. Still may the magical effect of saintly lives and chosen words be

reckoned on. From those who have walked in the steep places of the inner life the creative energy ever flows. Watts the painter has described the change he effected in the life of a youthful rake by a conversation about the stars. Even the obfuscated mind of an adolescent sot could recognise, in the enthusiasm of an artist for natural splendours, the suggestion of a life not yet closed against himself. To that clear instinct for the true our appeal must be made. Strangely beautiful flowers may grow on what we think to be but barren soil. Seeds of a bloom rare and lovely may be carried by the flight of birds to fructify in lands untouched by labour of the husbandman. And who can tell the procreative potency of a fresh untutored mind? So long as the religion of Jesus is mediated to them in some form, they will not fail to be fruitful in the graces of the heart. Of their moral culture it will be true, as the boy said of his graphic efforts, their best work is not yet done. Hold out before them the promise of growth and they will not remain quiescently stupid, or repudiate the hope of approximation towards a shining beauty. That they should lose this anticipation of a personal enrichment would be the saddest calamity sufferable by men. The French used to think that tragedy was only concerned with kings. Racine and Corneille must have the royal stage and the regal person for the production of their effects. It was a blunder as culpable in art as in life. For to one who, like Abou ben Ahmed, loves his fellow-men, there are few things more tragical than the spectacle of a living man with all his inner force uncultured and unuttered. The inglorious Miltons may speak in tones as majestically sombre as some Antony lured to his doomful Actium by the serpentine wiles of a Cleopatra. And for the children of a whole generation to live in ignorance of their religious heritage, is to repeat this drama of a spiritual abortion. In a well-ordered

commonwealth it should be as difficult for a child to grow up ignorant of the great faith of its fathers as to be unconscious of the succession of the seasons. This is what we desire for the coming race. Let them learn the truth as it is revealed in Jesus. The Japanese have amongst their many deities one who is the tutelary god of children. They call him Jizo, perhaps with dim recollection of a time when the faith was preached by devoted men in the Flowery Land. That shadowy conception ought to be expanded and illumined for the minds of our European youth. For to whom shall we go, seeking the counsel and wisdom that we need in the education of our offspring, if not to Him who, in no sentimental fashion, but in sweet and sober reality, is the children's friend? He loved them when He was on earth. His tenderest words have the little ones for their centre. 'Twill be a sad age when our babes grow to maturity, and enter upon the mazy paths of the world, without ever having read or heard the story of the manger-cradled Child.

The ideal Russian pilgrim begins his journey to Jerusalem when but a boy. Through summer's heat and through the frosts of winter he treads his self-appointed path, and, should his strength fail him ere the goal is reached, he knows that God will grant him grace to reach it at last. For that final stage he trusts in the help given from above. Should it not be so with all of God's children who are travelling to a Jerusalem which is above, and therefore free? At the last God helps us along the weary road. Not carelessly ignoring the beauty of the path, but never forgetting the loveliness of the distant city of desire, the child should journey. He must know that at last the gates will open, and the welcoming voice be heard. With the pilotage of Jesus this pleasant pilgrimage must be begun. For He knows the road.

PART III.—THEOLOGICAL

CHAPTER I

JESUS AND AGNOSTICISM

FEW theories of life are more attractive than that which has for so long been associated in our minds with the name of Huxley. The agnostic stands before life and confesses that he knows nothing. Any worship that he offers to the inscrutable powers who have the guidance of this strange world must be chiefly of the silent sort. And this is not to be wondered at. That the agnostic should ever attempt to vocalise his theory of life would appear to be one of the anomalies of existence. For he is convinced of the fallibility of the judgments made by the human mind. He is sure of its liability to deception. How, then, can he construct a sentence without introducing propositions tacitly, if not explicitly, which it is the aim of his intellectual effort to prove are contradictory and unjustifiable? Should he even say that man is mortal, it would be open for the more prudent side of his intellect to add a question mark to that well-established proposition. He ought to insert a doubt as to whether we are sufficiently acquainted with the facts to speak with such temerity about them. There is, however, one certainty about the agnostic in religion. He does not permit himself to be guided by that form of thought in the common relations of life. No man ever lived consistently by the agnostic creed in all his human relations,

For the immediate result could only be that the very faculty of action would be taken from him. That we do not know sufficient to justify rash condemnation of every other form of thought, would be cheerfully admitted by every man who has the interests of religion at heart. But that we should therefore remain permanently undecided on the most important of all issues, would appear to be rank madness. It would certainly be thus judged if it were connected with anything less important than the relation of man to his eternal interest. The commerce of the world would be brought to a standstill more effectively by such a proceeding than by all the efforts of the Anarchist or the Syndicalist. Let the man in Lima resolve that he will not trade with the merchant of London until he has indisputable guarantees that he will receive fair treatment, that his goods will be secure and his profits proportionate, and there would be a speedy conclusion to that part of the world's industry. There must be willingness to accept a certain risk. A man must act upon imperfect information, knowing that the information is imperfect, or there is not an enterprise in the world which would not fall to pieces from sheer lack of cohesive force within twelve months.

By what right does the religious agnostic decline to concern himself with the affairs of the soul and yet expect that men in the same city will trust him? He looks to them to send him as their representative on the local council, or commission him to speak for them in the national assembly. On his own ground their judgment ought to be that he may be an honest man and also he may not. He may serve their interests well, and he may have several axes of his own that need some sharpening. He may be filled with love of his Country, and a desire, to save the Empire may be the ruling passion of his life. But, on the other hand, he may be chiefly interested in the rubber plantations of Jamaica or the coco-trees of

Barbados. In consideration of the air of uncertainty which hangs around him it might be as well to leave him where he is, in the position of a man who wishes to save the Empire, but can find no one who will trust him to save anything but his own neck.

Under the régime of a pure agnosticism, this would indeed be a pretty world in which to live! We should be waiting for some one daring enough to proclaim that he at least believed in his own existence. Such a man would propose to see that his existence was continued. He would therefore put himself in the seat of the mighty, and eject the unbelieving and helpless coachman.

Of course this cannot happen. True enough, Cromwell's story, and the elevation of the world's Cæsars to the throne, might suggest that it has been dramatised before now on the stage of the world. Yet it does not seem likely to be a frequent occurrence. For men have too much common sense to allow "I would not, to wait upon I would" in this frantic fashion. They do not permit the world to go to ruin, while they are endeavouring to find truth in a well or amongst the stars. They seize upon the occasion as it comes. They apply themselves with such tools as they have to the business in hand, and by a process of almost unconscious progression they at last arrive at their desired haven. We may then believe in the validity of agnosticism as a working principle for the world when we see it applied with profit in our shipbuilding yards. Let men make it the mental groundwork of our vast industries. Let them treat it as the first requisite in the intellectual equipment of a great people's ruler. It might then have a claim to consideration.

How does it happen, then, that a system which results in such absurdities in the realm of the so-called practical, is tolerated in the sphere of religion? Why is it there the sign of a superior wisdom, the hall-mark of an edu-

cated person? The reason is not difficult to discover. It springs from the belief that it does not matter a stiver to anybody, not even to yourself, what you believe about such a tissue of absurdities as gather about religion. In every other realm of life you must show yourself acquainted with the facts, you must be prepared to meet the new foes who come to trouble you. Should this not be accomplished there is no resource for you but the old one of beating a retreat. You must fly before those who have proved themselves more adaptable to the situation than yourself.

But in religion this is not so palpably true. There appear to be no immediate consequences, such as we are accustomed to meet with in other departments of life, flowing from neglect of ordinary principles in the sphere of religion. A man is not visited by any visible form of divine wrath if he declines to acknowledge his belief in God. The mountains do not fall, the lightning does not strike him. He may indulge in all the rhodomontade of the Gallic atheist at the tribune without being apparently the worse for it.

But is it true that no consequences follow? There are many occasions on which the refusal to make a positive decision is equivalent to the announcement of a negative. There are times when the art of sitting upon the fence will fail us. Circumstances will compel us to adopt one side or the other by the summary process of throwing us off our balance. And in the matter of religion there is no permanent standing-room for the person who is contented merely to say that he does not know. The whole mental equipment of the man is affected by such an attitude.

The result must be a tacit decision against the truth of religion. If not this there will be such a weakening of the volitional forces as practically to disqualify a man for the useful performance of life's duties. We have heard

much in recent years about the wickedness of the people who kept their religion in a watertight compartment, carefully severed from the rest of their brain. These persons have been for half a century fiercely belaboured. It is doubtful whether they can any longer exist. But we have not heard as much as we might have done of those who keep their irreligion in a similar chamber. There are many who deliberately adopt the negative attitude in this relation. But they are extremely careful not to allow this disposition to pass over into the other ranges of their experience.

Scepticism is no permanent resting-place for human faculties. Some power within drives us unceasingly beyond that dull and barren region. We men were made for action. The will to do is for ever stirring within us like a shifting tide. But action is the product of faith. Men can only accomplish mighty deeds when they are animated by mighty beliefs. Hence this melancholy indecision, this internecine conflict within the soul. Only when scepticism has been killed by the bold action of the resolute will can we begin to shape our ideal world out of the rubble heap of materials at our feet. It is against that emasculating scepticism which would make life worthless, which paralyses action by sapping the ground on which it grows, that religion must wage unceasing war.

Leslie Stephen has told us that criticism would assume soberer tones if critics were compelled to act on their opinions. And no more effective rebuke could be given to many of those who are indifferent in the matter of religion than that they should be compelled to apply the principle in other spheres of human life.

When Agassiz was teaching his students it was his custom to turn them alone into a room full of shells of all kinds. Then he would tell them to get what truth they could out of what they saw. There speaks the

wisdom of the man who is at home in both worlds. He knows that it is not by the perpetual practice of intellectual tight-rope walking that the sciences have been constructed. Those conquests have been achieved by the willingness of men to put their theories to the test, and to force their intellect to come to some conclusion upon the material before them.

And this is the emancipation from a sceptical indecision which is offered to us by Jesus. There is no guarantee that every problem can be solved in a few sentences. He does not promise to clear up every mystery which gathers like a penumbra around the edges of human experience. But He assures those who are content to follow Him that the contentious questionings of the mind shall become ever less insistent, as the disciple, walking in the Master's footsteps, applies the precepts of the Teacher to the difficulties of the day. It is this which gives to Him authority. He commands us to make this experiment. He would have us save our souls, as the swimmer preserves his life, by attacking each successive wave. He lifts us from the bottomless abysses of agnosticism by commanding us to act in religion as we act in life.

CHAPTER II

JESUS AS REVEALER OF GOD

Is Jesus the revealer of God to man? Any answer must recognise the limitations of human judgment. We are not capable of deciding what the future may have in store for mankind. There may be many revelations yet to be made. Truth may come to us in new forms. It may be that the course of evolution may unveil to us aspects of life of which we have not dreamed.

Yet there are some certitudes which remain for us fixed and determinate, beyond the reach of any influence which time can bring to bear upon them. The plain precepts of conscience, the explicit statements of human duty, remain unaffected by any external change. So long as men are men the conditions of the moral life must remain what they have always been. Morality in its essence does not change. Apart from the varying currents of opinion there stand these bold headlands of the moral world. They have resisted the corrosive influences of age. They will continue to resist the criticism which thought can bring to bear upon them. For they are fixed in the deep root of human nature. They reveal themselves with a radical similarity whenever opportunity is offered to them. Even so does a seed produce the leaves and fruit of the species to which it belongs, wherever it may be planted.

None of us is without some knowledge of what constitutes our duty in the present. That belief in obliga-

tions which are laid upon us, obligations which must be met if we are to retain our self-respect, springs from dispositions integral to the nature of man. Wherever he may be thrown, so soon as society is formed about him, these elements of his nature show themselves. They emerge into the foreground of his mental world. Imperative convictions make their claim upon his latent abilities for submission and sacrifice.

Set face to face with these moral necessities, we are prepared to recognise One who has given to them an objective setting. Some one must show us the form in which these monitions and exhortations of the moral nature may best be illustrated. We need to have them visualised in a living person. Here we are on ground which the Christian has long recognised as his strongest place of defence. For if there is to be a living exposition of ideas approved by the judgments of conscience, in whom shall we find it, if not in Jesus of Nazareth? He commandeers those powers of self-sacrifice which we instinctively recognise as the better part of our nature. And His right to do this is proved effectively by the sublime history which culminates in the record of the Passion.

Love is the high-water mark of the moral man's attainment, and how can we discover a more excellent way of proving our admiration for it than by acknowledging the supremacy of Jesus? He it is who can say, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." And is not this the apogee of moral perfection? For it necessitates the surrender of the one possession which we can assert to be our own. The value of such a sacrifice cannot be exaggerated, since it can never be returned to us.

It may be difficult to measure the relative merits of Christianity and the other great religions of the world. We certainly cannot do it by checking off their separate

items of ethical teaching. The grounds of difference between them are not sufficiently acute to justify this procedure. In all the important religions of the world there are similarities of teaching, agreements on the central principles of the moral life, which render any such profit and loss calculation invalid.

The real difference in the value of religion is to be found in the Personal Revelation. We must study the work accomplished through the Person whose advent has served as the genetic point of a new departure. To the Christian this has always been the vital point of his faith. He has known instinctively that here all battles must be fought. Hence came the belief in the Incarnation. It was the inevitable consequence of the Christian's judgment, that the advent of Christ meant the accomplishment of the most important act in the history of the world. He believed that the life and death of Jesus included the history of the world's Saviour. It seemed that the result in his own life was a complete transmutation of all values. Things which had formerly been despised became the most precious possessions of the soul. Thus he was driven to publish his belief in the Incarnation, to proclaim to the world that God had tabernacled amongst men.

This belief of the primitive Church, that Jesus was the Son of God and the Messiah, grew up naturally as a flower on a sunlit sward. It was born of the experience of those who had felt His influence and were prepared to submit to His control. No other explanation could comprehend all the facts. Men knew that a marvellous thing had happened to them. Their spiritual eyes had been opened. New worlds were now expanding before them. Out of this novel series of perceptions there grew the faith in the Redeeming Christ.

Eucken has recognised that it is in the redemptive remaking of personality that we find the central truth of

Christianity. For this is the deepest and most continually abiding need of humanity. Through the revelation of Christ we see the unveiling of man to himself, the uncovering of the deeps within his nature. He learns that he may rise above his ordinary self. Admission is given to a spiritual freehold, and all who seek may enter through the Caudine Forks of humility and faith.

What do we know of God? Can we define the nature of the Being who has made us and regulates our lives? To that question we shall be obliged to answer as did Augustine when he was asked, What is Time? "I know when you do not ask me." It is not permitted to man to enclose the divine nature within the narrow compass of a formula. At the highest range of our achievement in this direction we can but touch the skirts of His garment.

This reverent attitude alone is seemly. Confident agnosticism has been summarised and satirised in the phrase, "There is no God, and Harriet Martineau is his prophet." The assurance with which the religious man at times speaks of the Ineffable One may seem offensive to the cultured unbeliever; yet it is less irrational, it has in it more of that veneration without which, said Goethe, no man can be complete, than the clamant assertion of negations which would finally bar the soul from any knowledge of its divine author.

Squire Bedell had for many years attended the University Sermon and had heard this and similar high themes discussed. He thanked God that he was still a Christian. We have all felt some sympathy with his mood. For so long as we expect an irrefragable demonstration of our faith, we may lose it. Our citadel is open to attacks from without, and liable to pressures which harass us from within. There is no final guarantee of intellectual certitude. No authority can prohibit the encroachment of the critical reason upon ground to

which it has no title-deeds. We protect our beliefs only as we guard our liberty, at the price of a ceaseless vigilance and loyalty.

May it not be that the very fact that we have lived for so long under the partial control of religious ideas has made us doubtful towards their claims. Feeling their pressure even when least conscious of explicitly acknowledging their truth, we are led to the adoption of a critical attitude towards them all? For there is a disposition to reaction, what the politicians call the swing of the pendulum, in matters of thought as well as in those of conduct. Robert Buchanan was not a professing Christian, but he disliked atheism; and the reason for his antipathy was that he had been brought up in a home in which militant irreligion was predominant. To bring men back to a sharp apprehension of the value of Christianity, it may be necessary that unbelief should grow to even larger proportions.

Men must feel the pressure of that empty space which atheism leaves around and above them. Then there may come the reaction towards a form of thought which demands as its rudiment belief in a living and acting God.

Already, indeed, there are signs that this is more than possible. Of Népomucène Lemercier, it was said that he made his deities caloric, oxygen, and phosphorus. That condition of mind is stirring men to a sickened disgust by its moral inutility and barrenness of sentiment. The materialism which would resolve all high thinking, all the poetry of the imagination into the product of despiritualised molecular forces, is being tacitly denied by the masses of mankind. And this change of attitude is not the result of any reasoned demonstration. It is a subconscious recognition that the theory will not prove practically useful, that it does not meet all the facts of the situation.

Huxley has given us a sharp reminder of the moral

limitations of Nature in his sober statement that "the things for which men are hanged and imprisoned are Nature's everyday performances." And this has left its keen impression upon the mind of the race. A nature so utterly non-moral cannot be regarded as the fruitful ground from which has sprung the splendid treasure of human altruism and sacrificial love.

If we accept Jesus as our guide, what then may we say of God? Can we say anything which is profitable and true? Yes, we may say that the one quality which we must attribute to God is that of personality. Difficult as this may seem to the mind of our time, it is the indispensable substratum on which the whole structure of religion must rest. The critic may strip the idea of God of all else, but he must leave this. Otherwise the mind can find no idea that it can grasp, no solid ground on which it can find support.

Let us refuse to be juggled out of this belief. Is it said that the idea of personality implies limitation and is, therefore, an insult to that Divine Being who is the source of all life? True, if we persist in thinking of personality as that which is separated from other things. If we fix our regard on the exclusive effect of the idea, we may find it hard to think of God as personal. But we may say, with Lotze, that God is the only perfect personality. We may think of Him as the one who gathers up into Himself all the attributes of our lesser forms of personal life. We may see Him as standing over against us, the one complete Being that man can ever know. Then, indeed, we are not relieved from all the entanglements of thought. But we have solid ground on which the faithful and believing spirit can rest.

For thus we are saved from the delusive idea that God is dependent for His development into perfect consciousness upon the puny efforts of such creatures as ourselves. Thus do we escape the ghastly responsibility

of those who teach us that only through the efforts of ignorant and foolish men can the Absolute Power and Goodness which we name God come into being.

It is necessary to keep in mind the distinction between the purpose of God and His person. We are the instruments by which that holy purpose is made manifest and at last fulfilled. But we recognise that the Person of God stands already above us, an awful and sublime reality, towards the knowledge of which we labour that we may have fellowship with Him.

This transcendence of God, this superiority to the change and flux of time, needs to be emphasised once more. Not otherwise can our proper place in the creative design be understood. Some of us are still in the mood of the brilliant and defiant Frenchman who was called "the personal enemy of Providence." Growth in human pride, based upon the illusory conquests made in the realm of physical science, has led us to deny and defy the Omnipotent. Dreading the thought of a Holy Authority, we have shrunk from the idea of a God who is above the world, while yet animating its life and inspiring its activity.

Never can religion be an urging power in the soul, unless animated by the thought of God. He must be near to us, His Rule must dominate our conduct, His choice of good must serve as the primal reason for our choice of what we believe to be in agreement with His Gracious Will.

Can we then think of God as one who is becoming? To admit this as a belief is to revolutionise the whole form and content of Christian thinking. The high hours of the spirit of man have not been those in which he thought thus of the Divine Being.

God is not One who struggles upward, feebly and tentatively, towards a point which continually evades His approach. That picture of comparative impotence could

never stir the pulses of men or thrill them to honourable purpose and lofty hope. Such an outline has rather been the portrait of man himself. It is man as he knows himself in his moments of clearest perception. He is, indeed, a creature hindered by foes without and disabilities within. Yet he knows himself possessed of a resilient spring which saves him from surrender to despair.

No man has ever knowingly worshipped a god who was merely directed by good intentions. The most immature of humans, who adores some deity of wind or stream, and bows down before his fetish of wood or stone, knows better. He is impelled to reverence by the belief that from this god may be obtained all the power the adoring postulant may need.

Certainly there is a measure of truth in the doctrine of a Deity who is in process of becoming. It implies that the unveiling of his majesty and power is of necessity a gradual process. The eye is gradually adapted to the vision. Its growing splendour must not fall upon the sensitive organ at one flash, or the faculty of sight may be destroyed. New knowledge of the world is pouring in upon our minds from every quarter. It is adding to our conception of the treasures contained in the mind of God. We are shocked into the marvelling mood even by the perusal of the weekly journal. Scarcely a newspaper is published without some new suggestion. Everywhere men are labouring at the discovery of truth in some one of its many ranges. But this progression of the intellect of man is very different from an actual evolving of the Eternal Being of God. As well might the pupil who is struggling with his Latin Declensions say that his teacher is *becoming* before his eyes. What if the teacher had no existence save in the mind of the solitary student? Who supposes that the boy's idea of the teacher is the only form of existence permitted to that hard-worked and disillusioned person? Were that

the case it might be argued that his Being was passing into Becoming. But the teacher is a recognisable quantity, nay, a perceptible and even tangible force, to a number of other boys, who are all equally struggling with the mysteries of the grammar. And it is unfair to him to suggest that his only real Being is that found in the idea entertained of him by one boy. Surely it is a little presumptuous to suggest that God is only coming into being through our feeble cognisance of His world activities. "If there be a God, how can I be content to admit that he is other than myself?" asks Nietzsche. Are we also bitten by that tarantula madness? No, the sacred veil of the temple is not to be rent by any syllogistic process of that nature. He of whom the Psalmist said, "Thou coverest Thyself with light as with a garment," is surely not dependent for existence upon the perceptive faculties, sensual or spiritual, of any kind of man. To make such an admission is to sacrifice the whole driving power of the religious impulse. It is to go beyond Berkeley. For it is to confess that the plunging waters of Niagara do not exist, save in the imagination of the youth who has imprinted its picture upon the lens of his camera.

Yet it is a mistake to imagine that the doctrine of God revealed through Jesus must be a completely exhaustive statement. Any religion which claimed to say the last word about God would thereby stultify itself. The existence of an unknown and perhaps unknowable element in the divine nature is indicated clearly enough in the Christian literature. That agnosticism which is the inevitable concomitant of a reverential spirit is found in full expression in the Bible. There are innumerable passages which serve to rebuke the flippant familiarity with which perverted piety may speak of the secret things of the Lord. In one of the boldest assertions ever made about the nature of the Eternal Spirit we are told that the seer, hidden in the cleft of the rock while the Lord

passed by, was permitted to see only the back parts of God's glory. And wherever the idea of God is mentioned there is found some element of that reverence for the invisible and unknowable grandeur of the Eternal, which the man of science justly claims as the first condition of religious knowledge.

And the Christian realises this when he tries to reduce his thought of the divine nature to intellectual terms. He is compelled to be diffident in his assertions about the central mystery of Being. For he is not absolutely certain of what he affirms concerning God as he may be certain of a physical pain, or the pressure of some external body upon his own. What he does maintain, and must assert in defiance of all opposition, is that he has reasonable grounds for believing that his spirit can commune with Spirit. He knows that God is near to him as hands or feet. For him the infinite love which is at the heart of the world does enter into fellowship with the creature He has made.

Concerning the relationship of God towards His creatures he has definite beliefs. In the ultimate issue of things there will be proofs of His benevolence towards all sentient beings. Time will reveal God's justice towards all moral creatures, since the Judge of all the earth will certainly do right. Friendship towards all lovers of things holy and pure will be revealed as the ruling characteristic of the divine procedure.

Is it said that even in the assertion of these elementary attributes of God the Christian is going far beyond what knowledge will justify? The answer is that he is not dependent upon the judgments of his own unaided intelligence for the assurance he enjoys. By the words of Jesus he is justified. He relies upon Christ's authoritative interpretation of the realities of existence. And as a disciple he is compelled to regard these as the essential requirements of any theory of the

divine nature which is to sway the minds of Christian men.

For his courageous belief that the Goodness of God will prove to be adequately supported by His power, he is indebted to Jesus. Trusting that the discrepancies of life will make way for a larger and inclusive harmony, he relies upon the words of his Master. And the disciple finds that Jesus Himself accepted this analysis of life. He was prepared to throw upon it the burden of His own tragic experience. Going through the most cruel trials of which human history carries the record, He was supported only by this sublime faith in the final conquest of Love and Power over the repellent elements of existence.

We need, then, the revelation of a personal God in Christ. Else how shall the mystic be saved from the pantheistic abyss in which all moral distinctions are confounded? Not for long can we retain faith in a god who has not revealed himself in any form to man. Poetic minds will always feel an attraction towards that theory of the universe which makes all things but parts of one living whole. Dignity is given to the meanest of material objects by associating it with the thought of a living and prescient Deity. Such thinkers may not be greatly concerned with the moral judgments of men. They are inclined to think that art is its own justification. It does not perturb them that ethical distinctions, once counted to be of supreme worth, may be destroyed by a purely pantheistic doctrine. Against that tendency the strongest defence is the Incarnation. For that fact implies as its very groundwork the existence of a personal Creator. It assures us that His mind is in harmony with the mind of man at its best. His judgments must be of the same character as those of the men who have travailed in the cause of righteousness from the beginning until now. The sentiment which made John Brown a martyr

and his executioners murderers, is one which must find an echo in the breast of God.

Nor will men be content with any theory of the divine nature which presumes that this important distinction is of no practical value. For upon it depends their hope of receiving a Judgment which will not outrage their moral perception. Better that the wrath of God should be a reality before which men may tremble, than that we should think the power behind the universe to be as indifferent to our glorious deeds of sacrifice as to our malignant crimes. Any interpretation of the world is more acceptable to men than that. If there is no intellect or heart behind the veil of things before which men can plead their cause, they are miserable indeed.

Man's revulsion from an adoration of inanimate Nature in place of God is not unaccountable. It springs from the fact that he does not recognise in Nature the two necessary elements of self-determining personality and goodness. Without these there can be no adequate response to the hunger of his own soul. He may recognise the glory in the light of setting suns. He will bow before the Energy which thrills through all things. But he does not find in these alone the elements upon which he must depend for support in the hour of stress. Repose in the encompassing arms of the Everlasting is what he needs. Here is the pillar which bears up his own weak and errant being.

It seemed an obvious truth to Bentham, that emotions have no right to exist in a reasonable world. But man is not content until he has found some response to the needs of his own inner life. He hungers for the revelation of a Power which is personal in the sense that it can at least answer to the cry of his own heart. He is not prepared to repudiate the element of truth in Spencer's agnosticism. God may be as much above the merely personal as we are above the animal. Yet he will not

sacrifice the faith which makes it possible even for the Creator of the universe to bow down and listen to the prayers of His children. Is this unmanly, is it a childish faith to which he clings? Let John Calvin give the answer, or seek it from Cromwell as he confronts the storm of Dunbar.

Most religious thinkers will acknowledge, with Arnold, that conduct is three-fourths of life. They are concerned with the activities of mortal life and its moral backgrounds. And therefore they feel with even greater force the need for something other than the worship of Nature. The obligations of man must be reinforced with the sanctions of a divine law.

Martineau had no faith in the religious future of those who renounced their allegiance to the personality of Christ. For similar reasons we put such emphasis on the revelation that we have through Him. It seems evident that we need the assurance, which comes through this channel, that the ethical pronouncements which we have heard in our own souls are true. Confirmation is thus given to the words of humanity's elect teachers. It is declared that they have their ground in the constitution of things, and reverberate with a fuller music in the breast of God.

For even to the least sophisticated of beings there may come moments when the authority of the inner spirit may fail. Then it is that men seek with longing eyes for the authentic voice of one who speaks not as the scribes.

And how magnificently this is accomplished for us by the word of Christ. Listening to Him we are constrained to admit that we are not arguing with one of our peers. We are admitted to a share in the spiritual intuitions of a loftier mind.

The Athenians, says Dr. Adams, cared little what any man believed so long as he did not proselytise.

They were indifferent to the thought of an absolute and final religion. Indeed, they could hardly have understood the meaning of such a phrase. For them religion was split up into a vast number of points of view differing according to the taste and sentiment of different men. So many men, so many opinions. Religions might be as various as the flowers in a garden. They were not much more vital to one's well-being than the colour of one's mantle, or the shape of one's domestic pottery. The one stringent rule was that men should not make themselves a nuisance to their fellows by attempting to make converts to their own faith. For good or ill that mental attitude has been subjected to change. Men cannot view with quite the same sang-froid the possibilities which gather about religion. That haunting suggestion of the infinite, the sense of dissatisfaction with the best gifts of life, the desire of the moth for the star, reveals the change which has taken place in the thought of mankind. We are as those who have caught a glimpse of unexplored continents and feel within ourselves the fever of the traveller's desire. We are concerned to know whether there has come from God any golden word which will open for us the gates of the sun and permit us to hope for a prosperous journey thither.

Not now can we answer all the queries of discontented and insatiable youth with the invitation of Dr. Johnson—"Come, my lad, and drink some beer."

The ethics of Jesus, then, are to be regarded as absolute. That distinction between good and evil, which is one of the most radical judgments of the human mind, is in accord with the eternal order. Evil in all its forms is abhorrent to God. It can be only as prospectively regenerated that the evil person can find favour in God's sight. Jesus has shown His wisdom here by refusing to limit His teaching to specific acts and particular offences. It is to a general inward condition that He directs our

attention as to that which is deeply reprehensible. The tithing of mint and anise is an offence to God. But the heinousness of the misdemeanour is found, not so much in the act itself as in the ethical temper which it implies.

Connected with the division which separates religious experience from the experience of the scientific man, is the difficulty, felt by all, of discovering identities in the experience of different individuals. That there are many likenesses is undeniable. Many points of contact can be found in the spiritual feelings of men, whenever they have the opportunity of comparing them. But we cannot guarantee that the recorded sensations, to speak in physical terms, which have been felt by one man will be an exact replica of those which have been felt by another. Yet both may enjoy equal assurance of acceptance with God. The chemist knows that when certain elements are mixed together the consequent compound will be the same, whoever may have been the agent by whom the constituents were mingled. There is no room for the influence of the subjective forces to operate. Once know the elements of a black draught or of gunpowder, and the desired result can always be achieved. But religious experience is differentiated by the personality of the individual subject from that of all others. It is his experience. He can no more escape from the reality of it than can the man who has just missed being smashed to pieces on the Alps, and whose hair has been turned white by the horrible tension of five seconds' mortal fear. Such a man knows what the dread of sudden death is for himself. But he cannot be sure that the stolid guide who has confronted that possibility day after day for twenty years, views it from exactly the same angle.

It has been said with truth that science is "us" while religion is only "me." Under this limitation the religious thinker must always work. He can have no com-

plete certitude that the vision of truth given to him is identical with that of the man who professes the same belief. Yet it is morally essential that one man should at least be able to surmise what goes on in the mind of another. How else can there be any standard of truth? Where shall we find the ultimate criterion of truth if not in the common judgment of mankind? Granted that the best that we can do is to approximate to such a standard, that our thought must be an asymptote made up of lines which approach but never meet. Still we must bring them as near union as we can. Our experiences must be compared, our thoughts must be measured by their relation to the general standard. Else we must confess that there is no method known to us by which truth can be distinguished from the mass of falsehood in the world.

The conclusion of the Christian thinker must be that in the collective experience of the body of Christians, we have an argument for faith. That experience leads all of them to the same goal. It has many points in common though differing in detail. And it suggests the existence of a common truth, a truth which can bear the strain of contradiction and criticism from every quarter. Men have surely not cheated themselves when they have believed that their access to God through Christ was the deepest reality of their life. They have not been the victims of a crude emotionalism when they have believed that through Christian experience they could reach to communion with the invisible God. Whatever may be the revelation which may yet be granted to men, the fact that for them, in their present stage of development, Christianity may be taken as an absolute religion cannot be denied. It brings them into the region where the soul expands to its furthest point of enlargement.

This is why men are coming to think over again

the thought expressed by Sainte-Beuve. You may not cease to be a sceptic after reading Pascal, but you must cease from treating believers with contempt. The conception of the being and majesty of God dominated the author of the *Pensées*. It is still strong enough to compel the most recalcitrant of unbelievers to offer respect. He must acknowledge that there is room in the world for a form of thought other than his own.

Suppose, then, that we have no guarantee that the proofs of religion are to be found in the necessary truths of reason. Yet in the attitude of the soul towards God, determined by Christ, we have, as Peill has said, an interpretation of existence which commands homage from all thoughtful men. Instead of regarding God as an exploded idea, the generations to come will walk in the light of a fuller knowledge. The revelation which has come to them in Christ will grow with their growth.

This conviction it is which justifies men in saying that human life can neither be satisfied, maintained, nor explained without Jesus. For without Him we have no surety that the spiritual relations with the Centre of Life which men have sought can be set up.

This it is which gives to Jesus such immeasurable importance in the minds of those who think with Him. It is not simply that He has left to the world a number of admirable observations on the conduct of life. It is rather that He leads those who follow Him into the heavenly places, where the soul finds repose in communion with its Creator and Friend. We are drawn by Him to the very centre of life. We enter into reverent and yet loving fellowship with Him who inhabiteth eternity, and find ourselves in safe and happy harbourage after our storm-tossed journeyings across life's sea.

Whether the dream of the philosopher can ever be realised and the secret place of life made permeable to abstract thought, only the course of time can finally

decide. Bradley confesses that he cannot explain to himself how the Relative is related to the Absolute. He gives up the ultimate problem of philosophy in despair of a satisfactory solution. We need not feel, then, that we are separating ourselves from the citizenship of intelligent men when we confess that for us relationship to the Absolute is found and rendered substantial by the links of affection which bind us to Jesus Christ, and through Him to God. We say, then, that Jesus answers to the need of an objective setting of the ethical rule. He has enforced the creed of perfect love by the sacrifice of His life. His greatest gift to men is in the presentation of His ideas in an exquisite human setting. It is not wonderful that men should have believed in the tabernacling of God with man. The marvel would be that they should deny the revelation. He has set our thought about God on permanent foundations. Delivering us from the expectation that we can prove God's being, He has commanded us to trust the instincts of the soul. Under His tutelage we are delivered from the fear of insulting the Creator by speaking of Him in personal terms. We learn that personality is the only form under which we can think of God. He saves us from the conceit of imagining that God's existence depends upon our discovery. We can preserve the reverence which belongs to a Christian agnosticism. He prohibits us from thinking that we can exhaust God. Taught by Jesus, we escape the moral negations of Pantheism. We are compelled to believe truth is truth in each degree. Nature becomes subordinate to the moral principles of life. God is greater than His mountains. He shows us that customs change, but the moral distinctions abide. Since so many men have felt that Jesus has done all this and more for them, we need not be afraid of trusting ourselves to His guidance. The judgment of the body of Christ, the community of those who have believed, is

a guide to truth. And to all those who repudiate His revelation of God we put the question, Where will you find a better? Can we do without Him? To dismiss Him, were we able to do so, involves the loss of life's greatest glory. For no other voice comes to us as does His, from those dim aerial realms where the soul knows itself to be at home.

CHAPTER III

JESUS AND THE RELIGIOUS INTUITIONS

WE must begin to emphasise again the need of reverence for moral supremacy. The prostitution of the intellect to ignoble purposes begins with irreverence. When men have banished the idea of worship from the mind and have elevated Horace's "nil admirari" theory into a religion, they are prepared for every form of vicious intellectualism. If the modern prophet were to pronounce his anathemas upon foolish and wicked men, where would he commence? He would surely begin by uttering his "Woe" against the men who have taught us to believe that nothing is worthy of our reverential homage.

Burke said that the beginnings of government should be sacred in the eyes of men. He was not putting forward a specious plea for a selfish conservatism. He was answering the primary need of the healthy man for something that can move him to worshipful emotion.

It is essential that we recognise the vital nature of religion. Thus we shall be saved from expecting the same kind of proof as we may fairly look for in a lower order of facts. We shall know that we are asking from intelligence what in the nature of things it cannot give. The processes of religion cannot be explained to the first casual inquirer with as much facility as the chemist explains his method of making a tincture. It would be agreeable to our own self-esteem to think ourselves capable of this. But the request implies a confusion of

thought. To speak of religion is to enter debatable regions. The certitudes of physical science are, in a sense, detachable from the frailty of our humanity. They presumably remain true apart from our perception of the relations of matter. But the religious thinker is at once confronted by a pertinent inquiry. He must decide whether the very faculties by which he is making his judgment may not be radically defective and unworthy of trust. Butler and Pascal, Hamilton and Newman, have alike recognised that the first claim upon them was for belief in the veracity of their own intellectual judgments. Who can assure us that the judgment of Addison's *Cato* is correct, and that because "we reason well," the truth must needs be within our grasp? There may be truths of the highest importance, the recognition of which depends upon the exercise of other faculties than those of the pure reason.

Nay, it may even be that there is no purely intellectual truth. Truths we can understand and possess may become ours through other media. They may be the product of such dispositions and tendencies in our nature as would move the pure intellectualist to scorn. It is not necessary for us to be lost in such utter scepticism as possessed the soul of Mark Pattison. Yet we can believe, with him, that all systems of philosophy, as systems, may be false. It may seem to us that there is no complete and harmonious theory which can include every variety of such truth. We accept this, and yet welcome those suggestions and faint hints which come to poet and saint in times when the veil of sense is lifted. And we may be sure that in the clear intuitions of the soul, in the instincts which rise up within us, there are authentic utterances of God.

The presumptions of religion must be recognised. Else we cannot travel far with it as guide.

Can we hold the belief, which the religious man is

compelled to make, in the reality of our own being? It may seem silly to doubt this. For it is the first article in the creed of every human being. Scepticism here may seem the last absurdity with which the philosopher may favour the unlettered man. But unhappily there have been too many massive tomes written about this matter, to allow us to doubt its actuality. One after another the idealists amongst the thinkers have tried to overcome the sense of individual being and the consequent separateness of persons. They have shown that men are all parts of one encircling whole. Within this they are held as the globules of water within the compass of the sea. As the bubbles, rising with iridescent colours from the boy's pipe of clay, are enclosed within an atmosphere which envelopes Orion and the seven stars, so is the human being embraced within the Cosmos. But in making this heroic effort, they have incurred the gravest peril which can menace the serious thinker. They have been in danger of losing the very thing they wished to preserve. True, they have escaped the risk of eternal separation from the centre. But they have surrendered the conscious personality of man to the destructive influences of an alleged pure reason. Whenever this happens the consequences are fatal to faith.

Let us put this into more definite terms. The thinker says that unity is the condition towards which all things must tend. That unity is at last focused in one point. There God sits in the centre and enjoys bright day. All things, says the Monist, must at last be included in God. He shall be all in all. But if God is thus to include everything, then man becomes only an appearance. He is but a temporary figure on life's stage. There must come a time when he will be engulfed in the being of God. His personality will have ceased to exist. His life will have been no more than the vapour on the window-pane. On the other hand, if man remains,

through the change of death, and through eternity, a self-conscious personal being, then God is still incomplete. There is something which is not Himself. Other personal beings exist in the universe. Ideal unity is still to seek. Now every religious thinker must choose one horn or other of this dilemma. Shall we limit God in our thinking by retaining the eternal sanctity of the human soul? Or shall we save the unity of God by destroying the personal consciousness of the individual man? There can be little hesitation here for the man who has sat at the feet of Jesus. For Jesus believes in the worth of man. He accepts the separateness of persons. And we believe that He was right. For it is more in accord with the love of God to give soul life as a perpetual gift than to loan it for a time. It is the glory of God that He has placed upon Himself this limitation. In making man He has created a companion. And man may anticipate something more than an eternity of nescience, that Nirvana in which the soul is lost. He looks forward to seeing God. He will be satisfied with His likeness. He will enjoy Him for ever.

Can we retain the intuition of right for moral phenomena? At present we suffer from a scepticism which would destroy absolute authority in morals. It would reduce every ethical command to a pious opinion. Morality is resolved into the product of customs, the fruit of historical development.

Suppose there is no divine majesty behind the mandate of conscience. Then we have been mistaken in thinking that there are occasions when the saint must look without blenching upon the fiery furnace. He might have been apathetically comfortable amongst those who came not to the help of the weak against the mighty.

An Egyptian proverb says that it behoves us to follow the common reason of the world. We need the reminder when all traditions are being called in question.

At this time the commonplaces of the faith must stand and deliver their reason for existence. And it is well to recollect that there is such a common reason, and that we neglect it at our peril.

We may analyse the moral convictions into the joint production of our own desires and the influence of conditions upon life. There may come a time when the sacred judgments of the spirit of man will be translated into terms of rice or potatoes. They will be the resultant of cumulative experiences. We shall see them as the harvest of generations of enlightenment. Are the stern announcements of the conscience thus to be thrown into the melting-pot? Then we must learn what Acton laboured to teach his generation, that the moral judgments exist independently of the ages. The crimes of Borgia are not to be explained away by reference to the conditions of his time. The deep immorality which lies embedded in the doctrines of Machiavelli may have been partially the product of reflection upon the circumstances which were around him. But that does not affect the fact that such doctrines stand condemned, alike by reason and the moral sense, wherever Conscience may make herself heard.

We may refuse to give public homage to the moral judgment. The dictates of the spirit of the Lord in man may leave us unmoved. But then we must be prepared to see the precious possession of the past put in jeopardy. We must submit to the invasive pretensions of those who yield obedience only to their base desires. Seek for some judgment based upon the expediency of the case. You may get comfort at the cost of heroism. Find some tepid compromise which shall save the face of all parties while trespassing upon the prejudices of none. You may produce a temporary era of quiet placidity. But you will have sacrificed those finer feelings out of which the great deeds of the world have sprung. There

is no ultimate test of truth, says Newman, besides the testimony to be borne by the mind itself. Let the average man see the facts as they are. Keep from him the veil of lies and monkey trickeries by which the rulers have so often cheated him. It will then be possible to recommend to his respect, if not to his affection, the religious truths which are but the reverberant echo of his own nobler self.

Napoleon did not believe in the existence of a man actuated by clean motives. His construction of the world did not permit him to accept the theory that there are men who cannot be bought. And probably the secret of his failure at the last is to be found in this. The facile donning of the robe of the Mahommedan when it served his purpose was a proof of his weakness. He had a contempt for everything which seemed to set moral limitations to the aggrandisement of power. And this was more dangerous to him in the last resort than the loss of Lannes or the momentary defection of Ney.

Clear-headed Martin Luther was nearer the core of the matter. He was more afraid of his own heart than of all the Popes. Let the man of firm will once hear the voice of the intuitions speaking and he is safe against the storm. Let him bind himself in allegiance to those oracular commands, and no force can finally resist the energy of his assault.

This belief in the truthfulness of the inner reporting agency delivers us from Ferrier's aristocratic formula. He would make labour the test of truth as it is also the measure of wealth. But these important questions belong to the life of the stoker and the golf-caddie as much as to the statesman or the philosopher. Is there no discovery to be made save that which is granted to a gifted genius? Are Leibnitz and Coleridge the only type of human creature who can guarantee that the path of life can be found? Can only such as they point out the

false road from the true? Then what hope can there be for the enfranchisement of democracy? How can it exult in the sense of its own spiritual dignity? What confidence can it have in the wisdom of the Creator who has brought it into being? In that case our conclusion must, then, be the melancholy one of old. The multitude will remain through all ages besotted and ignorant. The true function of the millions is simply to obey the elect who are their rightful superiors. No improvement is possible for the dim millions of mankind which does not imply perpetual coddling and petting by their rulers and legislative guides. This is, indeed, a gospel of dim Night and leaden-eyed Despair. But Christ's conception of man teaches that there is in him the germinal idea of a religious faculty. He assures us that this power may burgeon under culture. Thus he sets us free from this hobgoblin of the mind, and bids us to hope for the redemption of man from his passionate childishness.

Men usually enter upon religious experience by a wise surrender to their best instincts. They seldom accept religion as a way of life from purely intellectual considerations. There are necessities of our nature which cannot easily be denied. Their negation entails a stunting of our growth, the submission to limitations against which we ought to rebel. Religious faith is such a necessity. Repudiate it and you suffer in spirit. That this should be so is in accordance with what we might expect. For consider the composite nature of man. The interests which appeal to him are numerous. The worlds of which he may be described as a citizen are in many respects different. It is by the exercise of other than calculating abilities that he finds access into some of them. The possession of the most logical brain will not prevent a man from blundering when he arbitrates between rival schools of art. The respective merits of Auguste John and Holman Hunt are not to be decided by arithmetical

computation. Either we see the distinctive worth of each or we do not. It is doubtful whether any education would enable an uninterested person to appraise their respective merits.

Happily no form of the intellect is debarred from the delights of religious experience. It is certainly not the special property of gentlemen who write odes to their mistresses' eyebrow. It is not the monopoly of those who refrain from the use of soap, on the plea that they possess the artistic temperament. Every man may possess and enjoy it. But it cannot be dissembled that the religious dispositions of our nature need a measure of freedom for their development. Not otherwise can they burgeon into their predestined beauty. They must be trusted if they are to lead us aright. That they are worthy of such trust who can doubt that has watched the results of their working? Who can measure the influence they exercise upon the life of man when permitted to sway the emotions of the heart? They are, indeed, often entangled with other sentiments and motives. These may seem to divert them from their natural line of action. There are pressures and strains upon us all which make it difficult to keep to the straight path of development. But the instincts of the soul are there. They proclaim themselves in unmistakable accents in nearly every stage of our progress. The man who rebels against their rulership is fighting against his own best friends. He is qualifying as a gladiator by bleeding himself to death. We need to be human to be capable of such madness.

What they need is the support granted by some indisputable authority. There are hours when they are still, when their voice can scarcely be heard. Or the opposing voices are so many that the balance seems to be almost even. Then the mind craves for some unimpeachable utterance from One who has trusted them and

found them to be worthy of His confidence. This is what the words of Jesus do for us. It is here that the full impact of His life is felt upon our souls. Nothing can alter the fact that there has been One who allowed these inner judgments to guide His life. They led Him through storm and sun, until they brought Him to a bloody Cross and a monarch's crown. No stress of ours can be so sharp as that which was endured by Him. We have had no such temptations as would justify us in thinking ourselves more hardly dealt with than the Master. And the confidence which could carry Him through His dark hours will not be found defective when we trust it in our own experience. Where He has gone we may at least try to follow.

There is an optimism which lies, radiant as a smiling April sun, on the words of Jesus. It is deeply bedded in the conviction that the religious intuitions are both valid and trustworthy. Because of this He still holds sway over the common consciousness of mankind. Gracious, indeed, are His words. Meltingly tender are His appeals to the profligate and the wanderer to return to the common road of goodness. Yet they are not so provocative of high hopes for humanity as those phrases in which He has revealed His own confidence in the urge of the inner life towards light and truth. Trust the common man. Believe in his undeveloped energy for righteousness. Then the dark mists which have risen from the morasses of our unfaith and have devitalised us by their poison, will give place to the clear air of a mountain dawn.

In the day of her bitter trial, Joan of Arc trembled as she saw the faggots. She felt in anticipation the biting clasp of the flame. Under the crushing sense of her weakness she moaned that the Voices had deceived her, that her life of high service had been a grand mistake. But when the deadly embrace of the fire had caught her and the white flesh was already thrilled with the pain, the

old faith came back to her. Then she could again declare that the Voices had been true. Poor wounded name, the bosom of the world's best will always lodge her memory. They will revere her for those valiant deeds which put the bravery of men to shame. They will honour her for the loyalty she showed to the promptings of the Spirit. Those Voices would not suffer her to play traitor to the truth, not even in the agonies of a man-made Hell!

Consider then our need for Jesus, if these immediate perceptions of the soul are to remain valid. He substantiates our plea for a renaissance of reverence. He knows that all religion is generated here. Our belief in religion as vitalism rather than opinion is authenticated by His judgment. He confirms our conviction that its appeal must be to the whole man. The faith we have in our own identity is strengthened by His teaching. Our hope for continuous life is greeted by Him with a benignant smile. He does not frown upon our soaring ambition. The intuitions by which we judge the merits of conduct are backed by His authority. He gives the prestige of His name to that common reason of the world which condemns the evil and admires the good. The habit of putting expediency before principle gets small encouragement from His teaching. For He believes in the responsiveness of man to the solemn invocations of righteousness. He does not open the soul's pathway to the intellectual aristocracy alone. His message is intended for the rankers in life's army. He would have all men trust the inner judgments of the soul. For He knows their worth as guides in the maze of existence. And it is to verify their report that He has come amongst men. That which they whisper in the chamber of the breast, He thunders from the house-tops. What had been spoken with murmuring humbleness He publishes for all the world to hear. And the soul needs this everlasting advertisement of its veracity.

CHAPTER IV

JESUS AS RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY

THE Princess Alice had spent much of her leisure time in reading and thinking about religion. Interested in the subject on its philosophical side, she inclined to the judgment that religion could be best interpreted in intellectual terms. Then there came to her one of those bereavements which cut to the heart. Her child fell out of the window and was killed. Confronted with this calamity, she felt that her intellectual judgments were scattered. She must trust in God. He understood the needs of all His children, for He was acquainted with the life of all mankind.

The incident illustrates that compulsion of life which forces us to think. The interrogations which spring out of life must be answered. They will not be silent until we have found an answer which at least meets our greater needs. It shows the absurdity of the counsel, so often given to men, to reject all thought about life and death. We are bound to consider those unworldly matters which are bound up with religion. It is a mistake to concentrate the mind upon things near at hand, in the belief that they will not deceive us. The truth is that man is too much of a reasonable creature to limit his vision by the walls of his back garden. He never grasps the true conditions of existence until he has done some thinking about that world which lies beyond the range of the visible. Did he comprehend his destiny,

he would put these things in the first place. Apprehending the evanescence of his own life, the spectral-like character of his transitory joys, he would find it difficult to think of anything else, save the pilgrimage on which he is bound.

Wisely spoke that holy woman, *Mère Angelique*, when she said that immortal souls only waste time until they begin to serve God absolutely. What a difference between such a statement and the theory on which most respectable people live and work. How staggering it is to our sense of proportion! It sounds like the utterance of a lunatic, who has lost touch with the world of actual things. The houses, gold coins and fighting ships, that we older children have created for ourselves, seem but the playthings with which we practise our childish games. But it has not yet been proved that the saint is wrong. It may even be that she is startlingly right. We may treat the suggestion that there is a spiritual and transcendental world as folly. It may be to us another of those fantastic falsehoods with which men have chosen to deceive themselves. Those who think, with *Montaigne*, that man is not made for truth and does not want it, will not be surprised at the religious man's abdication of intelligence. They will heartily join in that chorus of contempt with which every intimation of belief in a supersensual life is met.

Yet there are men of our time who feel that the easy flippancy with which the claims of religion have been dismissed, does not harmonise with the existing state of knowledge. It appears to them that there may be, as the artist naïvely confessed, "a sort of a something" in the world that they ought to revere. For this reason they refrain from displaying hostility towards beliefs which they do not share. For such men remember the story of the wise man and the fallen statue of *Jupiter*. He bowed to it as he passed, understanding that it

might be set up again. They perceive, in the ebb and flow of human thought, the possibility of a reconstruction of the faith that has animated so many hearts. Indeed, to such men it may seem that the hour has struck for rebirth of the ancient faith. Perhaps there is truth in the theory of Baron von Hugel. He affirms that the countless new theories and fresh discoveries of science are the material of a new world. That world is now to be corrected and modified by the application of the religious idea. What, indeed, if these labourers of the lancet and the probe, these chemists who have spent their days and nights with brow bent over the microscope, have been doing the hodman's work of the new world? May they not have been preparing for the time when the inspired thinker shall take their hardly won treasures, and, with the skill of the architect, co-ordinate them into a composite and beautiful whole?

If this is a dream, it is at least one of which no man need be ashamed. All honour to the men who have accomplished this by their stern allegiance to what they have believed to be the truth. Surely they need not be fretted in spirit at the thought that they are contributing to a religion which can incorporate them and theirs in its universal purpose!

This will demand from us all, materialist and spiritualist alike, a new conception of humility. It will enforce a rigid practice of that meekness which at the last does inherit the earth. But it is worth all that it may cost.

Perhaps the time has come for a new judgment on these matters. Men will admit that no state of mind is less rational than that which is indifferent to the interests connected with religion. Spinoza came near to the truth when he said that indifference was nothing more than ignorance or doubt. Granted that there may be some basis of truth in the claims of religion. Then

we at once shatter that pleasant equanimity with which men still look abroad upon the conflicts of theologians and philosophers. They will realise then the truth contained in the words of Professor M'Taggart. There is nothing, says that acute thinker, which is so intensely practical, as this continuous strife between good men about matters that the ordinary person contemptuously relegates to his mental lumber-room.

Surely there must have been some desire for truth in the mind of the man who said, "He shall be a god to me who can accurately reason and define." Admit that there may be some ground of justification for the fears and hopes of men. Then we shall not be unwilling to listen to arguments in proof of a theory so nearly related to our dearest interests.

That is a sharp method which was adopted by Lewes. He summarily dismissed religion on the ground that it confesses its inability to furnish the mind with any available data. But that expeditious fashion of removing the whole subject from the purview of the mind is not to be seriously commended. Cavalier treatment of that nature does not assist the human race in getting nearer to truth. Such men as the lively person who looked after George Eliot, demand more from the human mind than it can possibly give. They ask for a ready-made proof of the validity of religion, which they can take out whenever they want it, as a man may take out his macintosh when the rain threatens to wet his skin.

It is no disgrace to religion that it cannot meet the requisitions which are thus put before it. You might as well expect a buffalo to regale you with the saltatory graces and agile performances of a Taglioni. The evidence of every truth must be in accord with the nature of the subject. Piety cannot be enforced with a clever quip.

Men have wrangled about the root-ideas of life since the birth of thought. And we ought to be grateful to the men who have thus kept the intelligence of the world from slumbering. Every religion has been built upon ideas which continue to puzzle the minds of the ablest thinkers of the world. Woe to that man who thinks that he has said the last word on that topic. He will need no gravestone if they will inter him beneath his own folios.

Difficult it may be to prove that religion is indigenous to the soul. Yet we may assume it to be so. It is difficult to prove it, since no one's experience can be conveyed to another save through the medium of testimony. And the testimony of another can never be so convincing as that which we have proved in the depths of our consciousness.

But there are indications given to us of the existence of this passion, for it is well deserving of that name. We find them even in characters which would seem to be devoid of all claim to the religious title. It is said that the rocky islands of the *Ægean* Sea testify to the existence of submerged mountain heights and valleys. They prove that where the waters now flow there once were smiling pastures and lofty peaks. So is it with the soul of man. There are hours in which the least pious of men will be made sensible of depths in his nature as profound as those that terrified and exalted the soul of Pascal. Not all the cheap and glittering shows of man's busy life can permanently hide the depths from his gaze. He knows that he lives in the midst of realities greater than those which touch the superficial texture of the mind.

The mental mood of our time makes it imperative that we should again find some authority to which the masses of men will be willing to bow. No civilisation can continue to endure that has suffered its vital beliefs

to be torn from its bosom. And the multitudes are bereft of any form of faith to which they can offer allegiance. Hence it is daily becoming a more pressing need that those of us who have, or believe we have, firm ground beneath our feet, should make it accessible to men who are struggling in the quicksands of this age.

Time was when the religion of Christ might almost have cried out for opposition. Its adherents might have said, with Cavour, that if an opposition did not exist, it would be necessary to create one. But that era has long since gone by. The flood of antagonism is now so high that the Ark of the Lord is in peril of being swept beneath the waves and lost for ever from the sight of men.

What kind of ferocious wrath must burn in the soul of such a man as Davidson the poet? To him it seems better to cut off the entail of knowledge. He would leave the coming race without an intellectual heritage, if thereby he could secure the destruction of the religious impulse in man? There is no need to ask whether this anger is not at times justified. There are, alas! far too many examples of failure in all the Churches. So many men have failed to respond to the high evocations of the Master, that we cannot condemn hastily these uncharitable and rash charges against the faith. But such an indictment serves to illustrate the exigencies of the situation. It shows that the Christian must now think of himself as of one who is waging a war which knows no quarter. He is engaged in a life and death struggle with the squadrons of the world. Only through his fidelity to his Lord can the situation be made bearable for those who are to maintain the faith in generations to come.

We are in the presence of a spirit sternly contemptuous towards all spiritual pretensions, and especially

all priestly claims. The Venetian ambassador, in response to the threat of Julius the Second that "Venice should be made again into a small fishing village," answered that the "Pope should be made into a small parson." This is the mood of our time. We may have prematurely rejoiced over our enfranchisement from the authority of the Papacy. For we have not thereby escaped from the reach of an arm, tyrannous as was ever stretched forth from St. Peter's chair. We have been delivered from our servitude to the cowl and the cassock. But what if we have entered into bondage to an earthly and monetary power more humiliating and loathsome to the soul than ever was the See of Rome? We may shake off the priest as an incubus who has become wearisome to our expanding manhood. But there are many who are wondering whether a State which acknowledges no divine authority, a civic power which recognises no ethical compulsion, may not prove that we have evaded a chastisement with whips to receive a chastisement with scorpions.

In the plenitude of his grandeur, when the sun that rose over Austerlitz was still shining down upon him, and the crawling tread of Wellington in Spain was as yet unnoticed, Napoleon acknowledged that he could no longer obey. And the denial of his homage was not directed simply to Pius in his home by the Tiber. It was a repudiation of those Destinies which were to prove themselves even stronger than the sharpened sword of the Corsican soldier.

That is the mental condition of many who hold to-day the reins of government in their hand. They find it hard to admit that there may be a Ruler before whom even statesmen or monarch must doff the hat. By force or by guile they believe that the multitude can be maintained in its posture of subjection. They listen with unwilling ears to the platitudes of the prophet of his day,

who reminds them that there is "One who rideth upon the wings of the wind."

It is not an earthly authority that we are seeking. The competitors for the front seats in life's gallery may be left to fight out their tawdry squabbles as best they can. It is for an authority that will bind the soul in allegiance to the Highest. We seek a ruler who will compel the mighty and the mean alike to recognise that there is a moral principle in things not to be violated with impunity. Some one must again guarantee to us, that for every audacious rape upon the sacred laws of right a slow but awful retribution will ensue.

Meeting Emerson for the first time, Froude tried to lay bare his heart to the American philosopher. He sought a guidance which at that time he could not find in the traditional faiths of the world. From those serene lips there came no hint of practical counsel or advice, save the suggestion that the younger man should read the Vedas. There is the central source of our tempestuous misery of soul. The one man has so little faith in his own perception of the truth that he dare not, in the quiet intercourse of soul with soul, give definite precepts to another. So fretfully aware are we of our own myopia, that we have not the courage to tell our younger brethren what we think we dimly see. That we should be prudent in our handling of the human spirit, slow to claim that we understand the needs of another man, we all gladly admit. But when will our generation understand that the newborn race asks for at least some indications of those certitudes which have illuminated our own path across the waste? Men do not expect us, not even the youngest of them will expect, that we should be able to answer all the questions concerning life and death an alert mind may submit to us. But the guide who has found one sure path across the Alps had better stick to it and recommend it to his

friends. He is at least a more useful person than the undecided man who knows many paths on which you may travel, who gives you his benediction, and leaves you to break your neck amongst the crevasses in your own chosen fashion.

There is no need for us to claim the infallibility of Taylor of Norwich. He boasted that he alone of living men proclaimed the doctrines of the gospel as Jesus Himself understood them. From that kind of folly a very little learning may save us. But there is every need that we should understand for ourselves what those doctrines are. And it is our duty, having found them for ourselves, to instruct others in the truths that we have proved.

It was sarcastically said of de Morny that he only indulged in the luxury of principles when his interests were not at stake. That is a method we all understand. It has become so general amongst us that we think it extraordinary when men trouble to act in allegiance to moral convictions. We see that they have all to lose and nothing to gain by such a course. Yet it is just this habit of yielding to the pressure of the world about us which preludes our moral dissolution. Accepting the valuation of things made by the human flotsam that swims on the surface of the world, we end in the bitter tragedies of a Metz and a Sedan. A dose of sound religion would have saved the unholy gang which clung and festered round the Second Empire from the disasters which overtook them. It would have been more effective than all the gilt frippery on the soldiers' uniforms, or the feminine tricks of a meddling queen.

What the nations need, what men always need, is to feel the impact of the authority of Jesus upon the conscience. Whether His ministers are respected, whether His Church is allied with the State and supported by the patronage of the opulent and the well born, is a

secondary consideration. But the nation that does not recognise as binding upon itself the main principles of His teaching, is preparing for itself a day of wrath, in which all social orders are submerged in a scramble of riotous anarchy.

"The modern world," says Frederic Harrison, "was made by Roman Law and the New Testament." The Law may remain when the Testament has departed. But the result of that can only be that the Law will become again a heartless agent for the maltreatment of the poor. It will be as remorseless in its defence of property against person, of things against the soul, as it was in the least enlightened era of the ancient world. A law which knows not mercy, which recognises no ideals, acts upon the helpless like the Chinese punishment of the cangue. Its myrmidons are determined upon the maintenance of the existing community irrespective of injustices committed in its name. From its operations can only come moral retrogression and enslavement of the populace by arbitrary power. The Testament must be reinstated in its position of dual authority with the Law. Otherwise the relation between the uncertain justice of earth and the impeccable justice of Heaven cannot be maintained.

You may worship Christ or you may seat Necessity on the throne of the world. That is the alternative offered to the mind of our time. Once more the world's thinkers must stand in this valley of decision. They must ask themselves what they have found to take the place of that authority which they have relegated to the attic apartments where the worn-out furniture is kept. For Jesus alone has remained fixed in His orbit amid the wild gyrations of our intellectual comets. His inflexible adherence to the rule of simple rectitude commands our admiration. He has insisted upon the inward change which is to result in an external transformation.

His claim is for a homage which proceeds from the heart. He has not modified His audacious assertion of a right to rule the soul. Amidst the shrieking denials of His foes, He remains the standing rebuke to those who would found a city on sentimental mush, and defy a world in arms behind the bastions of a dream.

On the upper slopes of the Alps you find the hut of the Concordia Club. Some one has called it, not unjustly, the Place de la Concorde of Nature. For from it there run four snow valleys which on the lower slopes become deep and rushing rivers. So stands the figure of Jesus, confronting the four quarters of the heavens, supplying all who come to Him with the spiritual force that will fertilise the bleak and barren plains. Still He remains enthroned above us all. His snow-white purity gleams like ice-bound peaks in the rosy sun of dawn. Yet He smiles down upon us with that human sympathy which made Him friend to all the outcasts of the world. And for our age, as for all ages, the choice must yet be made. Either Jesus, the lover of men, or a shambling devil must occupy the chief seat in the synagogue of the world.

CHAPTER V

JESUS AS INTERPRETER OF A RIGHTEOUS WORLD

MAN has boldly distinguished himself from Nature. He refuses to be regarded as an automatic machine regulated by the operation of unseeing forces. And he will not be satisfied with the idea of a Deity who is in no sense different from that Nature which man has learned in some measure to control and guide.

Hence every attempt to make Nature into a divine and autocratic power, ruling the conscious and volitional life of a human being, must finally fail. The truth was daringly put by Pascal. Though the physical universe should fall and crush man, he would be greater than the universe which had destroyed him, for he would know that he was crushed. The conviction of this urges man to rebel against the power to which he knows himself superior.

Denying this theory of a Nature which is to be worshipped as God, whither should man turn? He will know that in God there must be at least that element of personal life which he finds in himself. Such a personal life will respond easily and freely to whatever there is in man of beauty and goodness.

Indeed, the demand for this idea of a personal and moral Being as the source of all life is already making itself heard. It is found in the utterances of those who seem to have rejected it, as out of keeping with modern thinking.

Lafcadio Hearn confesses that there may be no gods. But he sees that the forces which shape and dissolve all forms of being seem to be more exacting than gods.

The cosmic process seems to affirm the worth of every system opposed to human egoism. How this opposition to the cruelties of human selfishness can have come into being, unless as the expression of a will and judgment which is personal, we are not informed. But there is only one explanation of this apparent purpose in the process of the soul. It is that which postulates as the fountain of all being, the creative will of God.

When it is admitted that there is in the world's movement a manifest intention, we must go further. A purpose which grows increasingly manifest as the knowledge of the course of Nature widens and deepens, drives us to the doctrine of a Divine personality. That faith will grow more commanding with the passage of time.

And can we not see already how the wild impulse of the irrational creature is being superseded by the conscious will of the reasonable being? Is not the tendency to unintelligent drifting being replaced by intelligent selection? The dominating feature in the life of our time is the steady growth of this power of rational and purposeful movement. It shows itself amongst all the activities of the human race. And it seems the negation of all reason to imagine that this can have found its genesis in a source of life less intelligent and less purposeful than itself.

How can we escape the demands of the intellect and conscience for such a personal Being? Shall we suggest that He *may* exist, but that He is not the original fount of life? Is He only a subordinate power, operating with permission of the one unknowable and inscrutable Deity? If we admit this, we surrender the

case of religion and its claim upon men. Religion must persist in affirming that in speaking of God it is speaking of the Absolute Being. Granted that by the limitations of the human mind, it is compelled to speak in terms which seem to derogate from the unapproachable majesty of the Eternal One. Yet religion has proposed to itself the task of construing the whole world in terms of God. It undertakes to show that every interest of the human species, from the building of a hut to the painting of a masterpiece, is related to the central truths of human life proclaimed in religion. God must be recognised as present in all the forms of human activity. He is the atmosphere in which men breathe, the energy by which they continue their labours, the one power in the world from which they never can escape. To elude and deny Him may be the dearest wish of their hearts. But this desire is vain.

When men have admitted God to be the author of life, their thinking is sound. They have granted to Him that place in the world's order which is His by right. They have taken the first step to ensure the bringing of the world's chaos into a condition of rationality. Apart from the governing will of God we are like soldiers deprived of their general, or musicians without a conductor. Each of us goes his own way, in accord with his own errant will. Dissolve God into an idea, and the idea into a series of ghostlike delusions, and we have no leadership to which our naturally rebellious wills can submit. We become a horde of brigands preying on each other. The miserable weaklings who come across our path may fill the world with their futile outcries. They find no protection against the cruelty and injustice of imperious men.

Another objection may be made to the theory that God demands our worship. We shall deprive ourselves of that freedom of self-direction of which we have

become so proud? Surely the best answer to that is found in the facts of history. Is it by accident that the finest eras of civilisation have been those in which theism was generally accepted? Have men been entirely wrong when they have built their cities and framed their politics on religious assumptions? Did they blunder in thinking that an account of their conduct must be rendered to the Judge of all the earth? If they have erred on the side of severity it was a noble error. If they impinged upon the liberty of the individual they at least treated him as a man. They have never evinced the boldness of those who in our time, in the name of the State, claim that property, wealth, and even life itself, shall be entirely at the command of a purely secular authority.

A further objection may be urged against asking men to worship the Creator of their being. We may weaken those powers of initiative and self-reliance upon which we depend so largely. To which we answer that no man has ever been bolder, none more practical in his application of human powers to the shaping of human destiny, than the man who has whole-heartedly accepted the theory that God is powerful to do as He is wise to foresee.

Cities and commonwealths can hardly dispense with the sanctions and prohibitions of religion. Communities in which religion was recognised have exercised widespread and on the whole beneficent influence in the modern world. Their founders have put first of all in their programme, the belief that God exists, and that man must adore and obey His will.

Florence had a Savonarola as well as a Mirandola. France has had a Bossuet to put by the side of Rabelais. Pascal is as important as Montaigne. Scotland is proud of Robert Burns, but she does not forget John Knox.

We need a return to their primitive conception of

social life. The human race is learning that enterprises having no ground of faith to support them, cannot minister to the needs of the human spirit. Still we cry out for something, even though we know not what. And the only relief to our misery comes from the soul's obedience to the declared law of God.

Two of our European scholars, Zeller and Hegel, have compared the ancient and modern world. They have contrasted the calm scepticism of the antique age with the perturbed and angry scepticism of our time. And who can fail to see that the men of our century who have rejected religion are far from being satisfied. With themselves and with the world they live in they are alike discontented.

Perhaps it is that we are weaker than our predecessors. Maybe we have not the moral stamina which enabled them to walk blithely through life, unharassed by the question of *whence* and *whither* which agitates the soul of the modern man. Or may it not be that we have reaped some results from our long apprenticeship to the Nazarene! We have seen something of what life might be if Christianity were true. Therefore we cannot rest contented in a world out of which the light of the gospel has passed for ever. Yes, this is the true explanation of our perturbed minds. This is why we rush from point to point of the habitable globe, as though in physical locomotion we could find a consolation for the orphanage of the heart.

Not many of us are endowed with the happy temperament of Fontenelle, who had no passion for truth, but on the whole preferred it. That smiling irony with which the Frenchman looked out upon the world is unattainable by us. Something of the bitter pain of those who have loved, and yet have lost, abides in the depths of our souls and torments us with its insistent "might have been."

It is reported of Anatole France that he and his friends were discussing on one occasion some question of morals. The caustic Frenchman finished the debate by asking contemptuously, What does all that matter if one looks at it from the height of Sirius? There is the judgment of the man who has allowed his ethical preceptions to be blunted by the oppressive weight of the world's immensity. His mistake lies in supposing that our increased knowledge of the world's bulk must annihilate our moral convictions. We live in a universe, the vastness of which becomes every day more appalling. And we cannot escape that thrill of fear which Spencer acknowledged as he contemplated the apparently empty spaces of the heavens. Therefore, we are to discard the precepts of conscience as though they were the pragmatic imbecilities of the ignorant or the insane. Against that disposition, increasingly dominant in the thought of our time, we must be on our guard. Against the immoral or non-moral conclusions which are its necessary consequence, we need some kind of invulnerable defence. To enter the lists with these insidious foes, without having armed ourselves against the sharpest spears of the enemy, is to invite ignominious defeat.

That is a much more reasonable judgment which was pronounced by Larra, when he tells us that all the truths of the world could be written on a sheet of paper. For he understands that the truths which really matter to men in the last resort are not dependent upon mathematical demonstration. They are neither increased nor diminished by the alterations of physical magnitude. They remain permanently the same whatever discoveries may be made as to the dimensions of the world. To hold our moral convictions in fee to the geographer or the astronomer is to surrender the first right of the human creature, that of regarding himself as a responsible moral agent. Let it be granted that Galileo and Tycho

Brahe have destroyed the geocentric theory of the world. But they have not shattered the authority of the moral word spoken from within. Had they done this it would require more skill than is possessed by any mortal to construct for humanity a working guide to the conduct of life.

Long ago Plato, the divine thinker, saw that the doctrine of the physicists, that the world was the result of nature and chance, had a disastrous effect on morals. And the modern mind with its emphasis on the material side of life, aggregating immense quantities in order that by mere weight it may crush the individual, may suffer from the same devastating scourge. It may make of man the plaything of invisible forces. And in so doing it will annihilate the ethical judgments of the ordinary man. The breaking of the ten commandments may have seemed to our fathers an offence against reason. It may have provoked their just indignation, since it may even conceivably have been an offence towards God. But when we look at these things from the height of Sirius, they are trifles light as air. Controlled by the spirit of the physicist we shall think them no more important than the breaking of a china vessel by a stupid maid-servant. These are the sophistries by which the soul of man is robbed of its dignity. This is the manner in which man is transformed, from one who was a little lower than the angels, into a dung beetle garnering its loathsome harvest that it may eat and enjoy in its narrow cave.

It is well enough for our bold investigators of nature and the soul to say that they will treat God and the mind as if they were concerned with solids. But what if God evaporates in the process into some form of a gas? Must we therefore say that the dissipation of the idea of God in the mind of the thinker is accompanied by the evanishment of God from the world? Suppose that the

mind under this harsh process should be resolved into a series of molecular impressions, having no more identity or continuity than a crowd of fantastic shadows thrown upon a screen? Are we therefore to conclude that the mind has ceased to exist at all since in the individual thinker it has been destroyed by a process of Happy Dispatch? What right has a man who has destroyed his own eyes to question the efficacy of the organs of sight in other people? Shall we say that the blind and bleeding Œdipus is for the future to lay down the laws about perspective? Nay, are we to deny the existence of any such laws, since he no longer possesses the rudimentary organs by which they are discerned and formulated? This is to realise the fable of the tailless fox over again. It is to believe that all the members of the herd must be, even as the unfortunate creature who has lost his caudal appendage.

Yet whenever we put in the place of the moral instincts a process which is outside of the soul of man, this is our only halting-place. Such a process goes on its remorseless way without considering the utterances of the Inner Voice. And thus we subject to the avaricious tyranny of things measurable, those indestructible veracities which have guided the march of humanity's squadrons, from the forest and the cave to the Senate and the shrine.

That natural Selection is one of the agents by which the present state of the physical world has been brought about, no competent person would now deny. But natural selection has no ethical standards of value. It recognises no worth which is not purely physical or intellectual. And this is the heaviest count in the indictment which an outraged humanity has brought against it.

Can an agent so soulless have given rise to the passionate prayers of Monica for her wayward son?

Has it produced the moral loveliness of Imogen as we see it through the brain of the poet? Can this have made Griselda one of the fairest figures of the imagination? That is a conclusion against which the whole being of man rises in rebellion. It is a fallacy which denies the first principles of thought. For it is precisely by the denial of such forces that we men have added to our stature. It is by the determined exhibition of other and higher principles of action that the triumphs of humanity have been achieved.

By the adoption of this modern mode of reasoning, the reduction of noble ideas into their lowest equivalents, Falstaff shows how foolish it is to be troubled with scruples of honour. The modern buccaneer carries on his trade under the ægis of the city authorities. He fleeces his wretched victims of house and home that he may extract from them the last shilling of blood money. And he justifies his conduct in the face of the world by maxims which deny every utterance of the moral sense. He lends money that he may live, and the foolish people who trust him are the lambs delivered to the wolf. Captain Kidd can thus prove his conduct to be the action of a righteous man. He is at home in a court which accepts the principle that nature alone is the arbiter in all conflicts between man. Happily the police of the world entertain old-fashioned ideas on these matters. The gallows is still ready for the Hamans who would live by guile.

The basis of all ethical discussion, it has been well said, is the difference between a person and a thing. Kant has founded this truth on unshakable rock. This is the only profitable way in which we can hope to teach the generations to come. We must lay even heavier emphasis on the distinction between that which is under the control of physical forces, and that which remains a self-determining factor in the scheme of life.

What has Jesus to say to this doctrine of the supremacy of the natural and physical over the judgments of the conscience? His word is always to the effect that on the point of morals man must be at war with nature. He recognises no principle which will justify the strong man in a cruel exercise of his strength. The enormous weight of His authority has been against those who would make the world into a shambles where only the blood-stained fighting man has the right to live. No sophistry on this matter ever deceived Him. He probably knew every trick by which the fiendishly clever person justifies his crimes against society and his fellow-man.

We have no reason to doubt that His mind was always in agreement on this matter with the judgment of the best men whom the world has known. Whoever endeavours to revive in any age these time-worn apologies for the free expression of the brutal instincts of mankind, must be prepared to reckon with the moral censorship of Jesus.

It is to those who fear these implications of Nature's autocracy that Jesus addresses Himself in many of His choicest utterances. He is concerned for those who find the map of life hard to read. His words are addressed to those who ask with pathetic wistfulness for some interpreter who shall bring sense and order into the confused mass of lines and figures.

Let us not suppose that we have passed beyond the need for this assurance. Nature is not less kind or cruel than she was then. Stubborn she still is, and to all our lamentations offers but an unresponsive stare. The cry of the broken life, for a reason for our sorrow, is still heard. And there is no answer to men which can soothe their stinging pain, except that which comes weighted with the authority of Jesus. Still to us who have heard the words of the Divine Man, God is the Father. In the

ages to come He will permit us to see the riddle of life made clear. It shall be interpreted in the light of a compassionate affection not to be denied.

With what skill and force Jesus has drawn the notion of God, as personal will and love, out of the phraseology of the Schools and made it live before men! Every one of His important works is coloured by this cardinal belief. It is born with Him, wrapped in the very texture of His being. The relation which subsists between Himself and God is so intimate that He can only express it in terms which are steeped in lovely human associations. The Fatherhood is so obviously and simply true, the sonship is so real, that the words become ordinary terms of speech, used without exciting marvel, amongst those who live in His presence. And He has made them the property of a wearied world.

In the old time the Romans, who flung their banners over half the world, were asked by one of their Asiatic tributaries to send an interpreter who could expound his will to his millions of subjects, with all their diversity of tongues. Such an interpreter of the essential righteousness of the universe men have always needed. There must be some one who can speak from the centre on matters which are always coming up for discussion as the generations are born. And Jesus has proved His claim to exercise this rôle. He explicates for the millions the truth that lies coiled in the human soul. Climes and skies may vary but the elemental rules of life remain the same wherever men may travel. And as the exponent of these unchangeable rudiments of human righteousness, Jesus remains supreme.

He has come amongst men as the interpreter of God's will. No man can be truly satisfied who does not feel that on this matter he has touched foundations. When men know that there is a will which rules the world, they must wish to know what that Will decrees.

And it is to these questioning souls that Jesus comes as the authentic speaker for Him whom man cannot see. Through Him we know that God loves righteousness and hates iniquity.

We cannot, then, dispense with the assistance of Jesus as interpreter of the Divine Nature. We need Him that we may be saved from the mistake of confusing the Creator of the world with the world which He has made. It is for us to declare that we worship One who as Will and Thought and Love is superior to the world of which He is the author. And we find our faith justified by the attitude which Jesus Himself adopts in the face of a questioning intellect concerning the origin of things. We can recognise, with Bergson, that there is a purpose in the world. But we find in the words and in the life of Jesus the moral standing ground that we need. He gives us support in our contention with those theories of world and of God which would reduce the realities of action and of thought to the delusive Maya of our dreams.

PART IV.—EVANGELICAL

CHAPTER I

JESUS AND SIN

CAN we dispense with Jesus in confronting the world's sin? New teachers are reviving the paganism of the ancient world. They frankly adopt the position of those who looked out upon the world, before the Christian era, from sunny Grecian lands. They deny that there is any need of recognising sin. To them it is but a phantom of the imagination. This is an intelligible theory of the world. It has had an enormous influence upon the life of mankind. Under its influence have been produced works never to be obliterated from the memory of man. But is it a satisfying theory for those who are not privileged to look at life under blue Ægean skies? That it has produced great art is unquestionable. But, then, it is the recorded judgment of Hegel that the very perfection of the art of Greece is a sign of its limitation. It lacks completeness, regarded as a picture of the human spirit straining against circumstance. The Greeks succeeded in producing a wonderful harmony between matter and form. The result of their labours is far superior to any similar effort of which we have record. But the very quiescence of those marmoreal figures is the sign of their incompleteness. They calmly scrutinise the universe with their impenetrable eyes. And their immobility only throws into bolder relief the

effort of Christian and modern art to transcend the material substance. For these would make pigment and marble reveal the agonies of the spirit struggling towards the abiding peace of God. Jerome is represented praying, with emaciated frame and grotesque visage. Yet his figure may have more of real sublimity than the most beautiful of the Elgin marbles. For it reveals the spirit of man straining towards that light which from afar has shone upon the abysses of the soul. Carlyle could contemptuously dismiss the marbles. He judged that there was not a clever man amongst them, since they all had small jaws. But there is a more serious complaint against them, and all that they so magnificently stand for. They represent a stage in the development of the human spirit. That stage was surpassed at a bound by those who had seen the King in His beauty arrayed in the garb of a Nazarene carpenter.

Men may still try to adopt the pose of these perfectly-balanced human creatures of an antique time. We may admire their physical grace and beauty. Still glorious is that city where Pericles has walked, where men once heard the vibrant voice of Demosthenes. But the ancient harmony has gone never to return. The pagans of our day, clothed in the raiment of civilisation and compelled to discuss the politics of our time, seek it in vain. To bring back that golden hour of light-hearted enjoyment is as vain as for the dolphin to emulate the eagle, sweeping far above him in the blue.

For the only result is a discordance between man and his conditions. And this produces at last, not beauty, but the form of a life disgusting and grotesque. We may see no anomaly in Aristophanes rolling home drunk after a night's potations with his friends. The relations subsisting between Aspasia and Socrates, seen in the mellow light of the past, may not offend us. But when we watch Beaudelaire soaking himself with absinthe

until the poor brain is hopelessly fuddled, when we see his hands tremble as though from chronic ague, we feel only a sentiment of pitiful disgust. The ideal of the pagan in modern life takes on strange and far from attractive colourings. It may be possible to draw a thin veil over some of the relations between men in the Platonic Dialogues. The friendship of these children of the sun may be made a thing of beauty. But how is it when, in the crude daylight of our northern lands, and with the Press feeding our minds with spicy details, we read the story of some Oscar Wilde? Is there any theory of æsthetics which can make these things lovely or even tolerable? These blots on life may be found in our time as they have been in every age. But in one period of the world's history we accepted them as the natural incidents of social life. In this period we think the person who indulges in that form of pleasure has lost the right to be treated as a decent human being. By our conduct we express our belief that the man has forfeited his right to be regarded as one of us.

It is useless, then, to expect men to believe that sin is non-existent. They will not admit that the only form of rational life is that in which the passions are allowed full play. It may be that the nations may fall back into the pit from whence they have been digged. But it is hard to conceive of any people deliberately rejecting the Christian idea of restraint. They know that there is something better for them than a free expression of the vile beast, still chained within the kennel of the breast.

Shall we regard Sin as an incident in the inevitable evolution of the race? Must we perforce leave it behind us as we climb nearer to the snow-line and the sun? That is one of the pleasant theories with which many of us cheat ourselves. By its aid we succeed in keeping the elemental facts of life away from our eyes. We would fain live in the swathed condition of an interned

mummy for the rest of our days. We all believe that the idea of evolution is the truest and most comprehensive theory advanced in our time. At the same time, we remember that many of the most thoughtful of its advocates are still labouring for more complete definitions and more adequate formulæ. Does this give us any justification for supposing that we are set free from temptation? Are we lifted out of the range of those complex agencies which we summarise under the term sin? Think of this life alone for the moment. Have we known any person who has succeeded in putting away all contamination with the hateful thing. The king of old contrived to keep outside his gates the miserable wretches who might be clothed in sackcloth. Can we ostracise Satanism in the same fashion? Instead of that being the case, look at the facts. The more advanced a man is in moral culture the more difficult it seems for him to effect a complete separation between his own person and the lives of other men. And many of these other men have become creatures in whom the passions, acting under the influence of sin, are productive of the worst results. A man may emerge from the pit in which he has been struggling with the demons of the soul. But it is to find himself pursued, as was Dante in his ghostly voyage, by the cries and lamentations of those who have been caught in the lime of wickedness. They fill his ears with their protestations against the hardness of their fate.

This aspect of the solidarity of the race has vitiated earthly pleasure. Men have found, in the construction of ideal cities, that they must recognise sin. The good man may have kept the evil forces beneath the sway of conscience. But the memory of the sins of others torments him. The perpetual contemplation of them spoils every prospect. They bring into the fairest of nature's scenes the trail of hideous and undesired suggestions.

It is time that we had dismissed the idea of involuntary approximation towards perfection. It is perilous to our good judgment of the past. The fact of degeneration has often been much exaggerated. Too heavy an emphasis has been laid on the facility with which men trod the slope to Avernus. But that degeneration is a force always waiting for entrance into the life of man, the veriest child might have learned by now. Ramsay has uncovered those cities which at one time adorned the seaboard of the Mediterranean. He has shown us how easy it is for the human race to slide back into the dust from which it emerged. And the reminder is not without significance. Arnold was not soon weary of pointing the moral from the fall of those empires which gathered about the central State of Rome. They went down one after another for no other reason than the old and simple one. They would not learn how to do justly and love mercy.

Science herself affords us innumerable illustrations of this fatal facility. The old story may be repeated. The race which has attained to greatness may surrender its position of supremacy. It must do this if it ceases to strain after the things which elevate the soul.

And do we not all know that in the life of the individual the same truth holds good? Men are not certain of continued success because they have already attained a definite altitude of moral conduct. They might as well look for a guarantee of permanent good health, because up to forty years of age they have escaped the ravages of consumption. No position in morals is maintained except at the price of a ceaseless war.

What right, then, have we to speak as though there were no necessity for struggle on the part of men? Why infer that the ancient bogey of the theologians has been proved to be no more than a spectre of the night?

We need more than ever to maintain a watch against the approaches of evil. Again we must learn that we keep nothing without first having earned it. Even then we must watch over it as the darling of our desire. There is no spontaneous development in morals, whatever there may be in the realm of pure physics. There is no reason whatever to believe in the unconscious improvement of humanity. Not the slightest justification can be found for the belief that humanity will grow unconsciously into something fairer than it has hitherto been. We cannot calculate the heights to which the race may rise. But there will not be a step taken in that long trail sunwards without the struggle of man against the old enemies of the soul.

Of the Greeks it has been truly said that they had no sense of sin and no sense of duty. It would be not an unfair suggestion that there is an intimate connection between these two deficiencies. There is a gaiety which refuses to consider the eternal implications of conduct. But it is not a productive soil for the growth of masculine virtues. Think lightly of your deed as it may affect God: you will come to think lightly of it as it may affect men. Deny that Zeus is troubled by your offences: the transition is easy to a denial of man's right to be concerned with them. It is not an accident that the eras of history in which the sense of sin has been most keen, have been those in which the obligations of duty have been most rigorously enforced. The Ironsides might be melancholy when on their knees, but they were doughty antagonists in the battlefield; for they understood that they were fighting for a cause. They were the bond-servants of a governing law. Even life must not be withheld if the execution of their duty implied its surrender.

It may be objected to the whole theory of sin, as the Christian views it, that reformations in morals are vulgar.

This was Wilde's way of stating his dislike to the pressure of the higher self upon the lower. These regrets which men feel for the bad deeds of their past are profoundly equalitarian in their influence. These confessions of our weakness, breathed to the ear of God alone, or whispered to the compassionate priest of religion, have a trick of putting us all on a common level. They remind us that we too share with the Psalmist and Augustine, with the saint and the criminal, the high privilege of abusing our own nature. We may deny the divine within us.

Yet there is a nobility in this candour of corruption, with its humiliating signs and shameful tears. It is finer than the hard secularity which feels no compunction for wrongdoing and makes no acknowledgment of its weakness. This was what Robert Hall found in the characters of Jane Austen. He saw there a porcelain-like insensibility to the searchings of the soul. And this may be a deeper form of sin than the frenzy of the reprobate plunging to his doom. Against this adamant imperviousness to the reproaches of our better nature, some of the sternest words of Jesus are addressed. We need Him to remind us that civilisation is not the same as holiness. He must teach us again the difference in worth between John the Baptist and Horace Walpole.

Nature sometimes inflicts terrific punishments on those who repudiate her teachings. This might suggest that we are not on safe ground in minimising the importance of sin. One of his literary friends was visited by De Musset, when the fine genius of that poet was flickering to its end. His host watched the writer as he repeatedly filled his glass with equal quantities of beer and absinthe. Under the influence of this poison the force and beauty of the drugged intellect showed themselves feebly for a time. Then the stupor of the sot came over the fine brain and covered its lights with a

thick cloud. "Looking at this nightmare of a De Musset," says his friend, "I realised the vengeance which Nature claims." How can the religious man exaggerate, not only the folly, but the wickedness of this form of madness? The ultimate fate of these children of doom may be left with a Judge who will do right. But is it not time to stop the tirades of the besotted moral aliens for whom De Musset might speak? They outrage every canon of nature, of humanity, and of God. Then they borrow the philosophy of Omar for their defence, and speak of granting unto God forgiveness. Here is the sacred rule of modern Paganism: Spend your life in deriding all that the wisdom of mankind has taught us; laugh out of court every form of moral restraint; make of your body a living hogshead of noxious poisons; then have the effrontery to tell God Almighty that you will forgive Him for not having made you different from what you are: Speak as though your putridity were the consequence of the bungling handiwork of God; forget that it is the fruit of your own contempt for things you were intended to love and revere. This is the teaching on which we are expected to rear a noble and puissant nation. Such fools we mortals be.

When Lady Gregory introduced the lantana into Ceylon, she thought that she was conferring a benefit upon the inhabitants. It has since cost the country millions to exterminate it. We should think the Cingalese very foolish people if they spoke lightly of the destructive influences this plant has had upon their crops. The time must come when they would find their possessions endangered, and even their existence threatened, by this pernicious form of vegetation. And we find it no more rational to think carelessly of sin. In a world which is harassed, annoyed, at times almost maddened by the infectious influences of moral evil, ought we to encourage a generation to regard it lightly? This poison

has destroyed the finest fruits of human culture. Granted that the moralist may exaggerate. Like Juvenal, he may put the colours on with liberal hand. Better the wildest extravagance of the good man than the idiotic contempt of those who do not know the strength of their foe, or have already succumbed to his treacherous enticements.

The real difficulty which confronts the moral teacher is personified in the morally twisted man. And Spencer has told us that a problem in which the crooked man forms one of the elements is insoluble by the philosophical moralist. If that is the confession of the philosophical moralist, so much the worse for the moralist. Sad is it also for the crooked man, as far as he looks for help from the moralist. For the crooked man is just the one unknown quantity, the indefinable X which makes the problem of life. Let all men be straight men, and the moralist may turn glazier. His occupation is gone. And that system of morals is of little use to men which does not at least attempt to deal with the crooked man.

This is where Jesus finds His *métier*. He came, not to cure the healthy, but the sick ; not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

This it is which gives such paramountcy to His claim to be the regulator of life. For He is needed to render innocuous this power which has taken such fearful toll in human souls. There must be some energy granted to man. He needs a faith which is not merely the product of fancy ; it must enable him to rise superior to the allurements of the nymphs and dryads of the world of sense. Under its inspiration he must keep his eyes fixed firmly upon that world invisible which yet is most vividly real to the perceptions of the soul.

For thus it is that there is created in the human heart a new passion, stronger than any of those that once held the soul in grip. This will serve to inspire the man

when all else will fail. He is assured that there is at his command a power which has never proved him false. This enables a man to confront the ugliest form of evil with the calm confidence born of assured victory.

How, then, can a world which knows itself to be so enwrapped, even to the very roots, with sin, dispense with Jesus? Why propose to reject the one Person who has grappled with this monster problem? None but He can bring release to the oppressed spirit of man.

CHAPTER II

JESUS THE SPIRITUAL DYNAMIC

IT was during three months' illness that Peter Rosegger discovered Jesus through the reading of the New Testament. That lovely figure broke forth from the pages of the old book like a star seen by some wave-tossed victim of the storm. Dostoieffsky learned from that three years study of the Bible in his Siberian jail what it meant to be a Christian. The misery of his hypochondria fled before this new faith. He who had nearly become an enemy of the human race welcomed this new and better gospel as a sick man greets the healing cordial. These men accepted the precepts of Jesus as binding upon their conscience. To them His words were not the feeble sentiments of an imaginative enthusiast. Through the words there came to them a Person. Smitten by His beauty they avowed themselves the disciples of this supreme teacher. There is no difficulty in understanding this. The pages of the New Testament have frequently worked this miracle. They bear the stamp of the Person who is their central theme. Whenever we read them with minds free from prejudice and gather their essential meaning they lead us to Him. Theirs is one message. They speak of one character. They reveal one perfect life. Jesus is there as the protagonist of the mighty drama. The book could not exist without Him. It is inconceivable that the marvellous story could ever have come into existence had there not been behind it all that

one Face, which decomposes but to recompose. And this Jesus remains and must remain as the essential life, the final Arbiter of all those energies which have flowed from the gospel.

At present men are trying the experiment of maintaining the religion of Jesus apart from the person of its Founder. It is said that the possibility of proving the real existence of Jesus has become remote. The difficulties of guaranteeing the historicity of the records are too great. To rest the religion upon these foundations is to trust to a base of sand. It has not yet occurred to those who thus argue to question the method which produces such disastrous results. Yet we are supposed, on this hypothesis, to be dealing with a cause which has never existed, save in the imagination of some deluded peasants. That cause has produced all those marvellous results which are summarised in the Christian faith. It has generated the mighty powers represented by the Church, with all its eventful history. Is not this a proposition which runs counter to every judgment of the scientific mind? Stated concerning any physical phenomenon it would be laughed out of court as the fancy of a lunatic. It is only when we are dealing with religion, above all with a thing so obnoxious and presumably so destructive to all the higher interests of man as the religion of Jesus, that this kind of argument is credited with authority. An effort is to be made to retain some of the teachings of Christianity. At the same time we are to confess that the Person who has been trusted and loved as the Lord of the Church has never existed outside the imagination of men.

That this can ever be made practicable no one who has given thought to the matter can believe. It is at best but a council of despair. If there has been no Jesus there cannot for long remain a Christian religion. If the words attributed to Him were never spoken by Him,

their impact upon the conscience will become daily more feeble. Is it true that the impression which He produced upon His age and then upon the world has no more actuality behind it than the story of the Cock Lane ghost? Then there is no more reason why we should credit the words with authority than if they had been uttered by the last hero who flew the skull and cross-bones at the masthead. They remain as pretty speeches to be judged on their merits. We may reject them or accept them, exactly as we would the advice of some meddling friend, who would give us something out of the treasures of his superfluous wisdom.

Does any one seriously maintain that we shall then induce men to turn the other cheek? Will this help us to persuade them to forgive even to seventy times seven? Shall we ever make the divine charity enjoined by the Master popular amongst men, if the imperative of the personal will behind the words is resolved into a nebulous uncertainty? Of what value are they if we can only say that they were uttered by some one, we know not whom, in a world entirely different from that to which we are all accustomed? We might as well hope to stop a charge of cavalry with a popgun, or repeat the futile experiment of Canute and command the waves to respect our august persons. We cannot stem the torrent of vengeful passions in their sweep through human society with the utterance of pious maxims.

How different the whole question looks when we study it from the standpoint of one who believes that Jesus has spoken with authority and not as the scribes. Montesquieu said of the reforms of Louis that he destroyed the evil in making one think of the good. The man behind the words, the intense faith which must first of all find a home in the breast of one man, this makes magical the spoken word. This gives a prestige to the law, which will never cease to influence

mankind. Let us know that the judgment is not the oracular pronouncement of an impersonal Voice, some dim and errant Echo from the realm of shades, but the authentic speech of one who has met life in flesh and blood. Then we will give credence to the message, or at the least a respectful hearing to the word. No man speaks in vain if we only know that it is out of his own heart that the oracle is delivered. But the impersonal speech is to living men as the moaning of the wind amongst the bending firs, a sound and nothing more.

And we sadly miscalculate the nature of men if we imagine that they are willing to bow their heads to anything so impalpable as a voice. Still less if that voice comes across the centuries devoid of relation to a known person and power. William of Normandy could confront every attempt to curb his unbending will with the assertion, "I hold my kingdom of God and my sword." But that was in the days when men professed to believe at least in God. Whatever their station they were not ashamed to acknowledge One before whom even kings must submit. But now that we have, as Newman predicted, reduced God to a form of gas, when the physicist is ready with his theory to explain everything in terms of material phenomena, it will no longer be necessary to make the name of God a suffix to the explanation of earthly power. Again it will be understood that the only acknowledged source of right is the good right arm. The sword will be the only arbiter. Men will again find themselves without appeal from that stern tribunal. The only criterion of right will be the energy with which a man can defend himself against his aggressors. This is that supreme immorality which throughout the centuries has been intermittently resurgent. It has been restrained, compelled to render at least an external homage to something higher, under the rule of the gospel. But if there is no longer any authority for

the words of Jesus, the old brigandage will be unrestrained again. The good old rule, the simple plan, will again have charter to work its devilish will.

It was said by Theognis that no amount of teaching will make a bad man good; and there is truth in the dictum. It is not by an explication of the results of evil, or by any analysis of the respective values of right and wrong, that the fierce frenzies of the Thracian women or the rapacity of the piratical legionaries are to be withstood. Bad men will force their way through every maxim of the schools. The Ishmaelites of the world will always try to live in defiance of regulations promulgated for the well-being of society. Cartouche can argue himself and almost convince his victims that there is no wrong in his thieveries. Robin Hood may become a romantic hero; and the Highland riever, that precursor of the modern magnate of a Beef Trust, will be able to argue himself into a belief in his own honesty.

But there is an answer in this connection to the ancient saw. For Jesus is something more than one of the world's schoolmasters. He is not a member of the clan whose adherents propose to make the world better by telling other people what to do, while carefully avoiding the application of their own precepts. He speaks as one who has seen the truth in letters of fire on the scroll of heaven. His authority is supported by the fact that He pledged His life in support of His beliefs. The majesty of His utterance is found in the fact that He has lived in the secret place where truth is found. And there is no man who has not at some time, even in the midst of his course of abandoned wickedness, felt the rebuke of that benignant counsel, the majesty of that mild control.

Where shall we find inspiration to help men in the pursuit of goodness, if not in Him? No one can deny that He at least believed in His own theory of life. And

what a difference it would make to us all if we could once master the art of believing in any such theory of our human existence. Most of us have not the courage to preach our beliefs to others, because we have not yet dared to believe ourselves. We accept the current morality, we bow down to the popular deities. Perhaps we think a little scornfully of them as did Lucian of old. But these idols of the forum and the marketplace are there, and it is easier to grant them a respectful obeisance as we pass than to assert our independence of them. Besides, we remember that even when they are for a time discredited they may yet be set up again.

We men of this century feel with Sidgwick, that we would not make converts to our philosophy if we could. The pleasure that we derive from it is so small. We can only hope that the younger generation will escape from it. If they must enter those dark labyrinths and wander, Ariadne-like, amongst the tangled maze, they shall at least not have us to blame for finding themselves there. What a state of mind is this! See to what our boasted discoveries have brought us! We have struggled with the mystery of life only to find at last that the answer is one which, like Medusa's head, petrifies those upon whom its baleful glances fall! Our fondest prayer is that the rest of mankind may nourish their delusions. Let them continue to believe in whatever follies they find in their world's pleasure fair. That way lies death. No society can continue to lead the world if this is its theory. Nay, hardly can it hope to maintain itself alive in this tumultuous universe, if it has not the energy to believe and to propagate its beliefs in the value of what life grants to men. What kind of a Polar sea of morals is this to which we are introduced? Here no living herb can flourish. Starvation is the only prospect of the soul, and death reigns in icy supremacy over all the ghastly scene. This is what justifies the followers of

Jesus in believing that there has not yet been discovered the substitute for their faith. Whatever it has failed to do, it has at least given men something to live for. It has enabled them to confront the terrors of the unknown world with the assurance that wherever they might be, the smile of God was upon them. Drummond tells us that on his African journey he visited the station where the missionaries laboured, in the hope of conversing with them. He found the station, the houses built by their own hands, the church in which they had conducted worship, and their graves. Out on the frontiers of the world they had lived and died, as many a hundred others have done. They were aware that disease might slay their bodies, the weapon of the enemy might find them at any moment, but through it all they knew themselves to be working at what God had commissioned them to do. We say that the philosophy which leaves a sensitive soul like Sidgwick without the passion to proclaim his message to the world is damned. It and all like it need no other confutation than this. They have destroyed the chief joy of living, the joy of granting to others admission into the soul's paradise that we ourselves have found. And any faith, though it were the veriest mumbo-jumbo worship that was ever whipped by the thongs of the satiric lictor, is better than this, if it enables a man to fling life away in the task of proclaiming his belief to the world. It is, finally, more profitable to the moral interests of mankind than any one of the anæmic schemes of scholastic scepticism engendered in the solitudes of an academic cloister.

An admirable teacher, Dr. Hatch, has told us that one secret of the success of Christianity was that it had no system. Its beliefs reflected the variety of the world about them. Its victory was won by the preaching of the love of God in man, not by the proclamation of Greek metaphysics. That there is a measure of truth

in this observation no one would deny. But the acceptance of the judgment in its entirety presupposes that men have radically changed in their mental habits. It implies that they are no longer the same creatures as those who first heard the story of the gospel. Yet, is the change so great? There may have been something lacking in the popular metaphysic of that time. But there must have been present that plain sense which has always characterised the populace in great movements. They must have realised that the preaching of love to God and man was not entirely new. How, then, could a vast change be effected by the mere proclamation of the message? Behind the word there must have been a personal authority and a living will. This was the driving power behind the gospel, the fact that the truth was centred in one vital Figure. That Person loomed large in the plexus of evangelistic ideas. Indeed, without Him they were unintelligible and impracticable. Jesus stands behind these words of compassion and reverent affection. The Man is there, and it is because of the Man's presence that the words fall so sweetly on the ear and exercise such a transforming power.

Eucken assures us that the spiritual order cannot develop itself over and above our personal intention. Only in so far as we wish for it can it ever be produced. This truth Jesus has stamped with the seal of His authority. He does it in the belief that He can help men in the development of this personal intention. Taught by Him, they will see the beauty of the spiritual order. They will strive for its production and maintenance in the world. When men are in relation with Jesus they feel the thrill of this better cosmos. It needs such a certitude to keep their belief fixed against the vicissitudes of time and change. It is Jesus or surrender or despair.

The driving power of the gospel as an agent for the production of the highest altruism needs no proof. It

has been shown in every field of human endeavour during twenty centuries. Wherever the explorer has dared to go he has been followed by the Christian disciple. These servants of the Gospel have felt that the all-important thing was the announcement of the truth as they knew it in Jesus. The delicate woman known as Brigadier Lee was one of the heroines of the Salvation Army. On her deathbed in Norway she could answer those who asked her if she were afraid of dying, "It is for this I have lived." To be amongst those who have felt the impulse of this high vocation is an honour transcending earthly glories. To have answered to the call has been the glory of men and women who have known the keenest pleasures of life. They have found a subtler joy in service to the souls of men. We do not depreciate, far from it, the fidelity which has so often been shown by the man of science to his chosen cause. There is no profit to religion in disparaging those heroisms which have dignified the life of the traveller. Speke and Stanley, Franklin and Scott, have won their meed of praise. The splendid services rendered to the cause of humanity by chemist and anatomist can never be denied. Galvani and Virchow, Hunter and Curie, have gained their fixed place in the human story. These men have felt that their special task lay in other directions than the religious, and yet believed that their work was truly holy. The courage of Voltaire is as admirable as the daring and tenacity of Ignatius. The defender of Calas has his own place in the pantheon of great men. He would have it though he had never written a line for or against religion. But the special glory of the gospel is that it has been the inspiration of the ordinary man. By its agency the commonplace person has been elevated above his normal standard. Jesus has moved to high enterprise men who would else have been amongst what Confucius called the virtuous people of the villages.

This influence of the Master has never been a mere instruction. It has never been a power which has affected the intelligence without touching the vital centres. In its representative instances it has revealed itself in the fruits of conduct. We hear of the educated Hindu that he will pass examinations in Hygiene and will then stand idly by while every law of sanitation is broken. That is the invariable result of an education which never finds its way into the seat of life. It remains as an accretion fixed upon life from without. Every system of life which is merely an intellectual judgment, will result in these discrepancies in perception and practice. Men will know the difference between opposing colours, but they will persist in acting as if the difference did not exist. It is easy to say that the chief need of man is more brain. But he must be one of life's outsiders who imagines that the enlargement of mental faculties will of necessity produce beneficent alterations in practice. The true need of man is for the perpetual enrichment of his spiritual forces. He requires a larger supply of the generating power which will result in piety and justice. Whatever fails to be taken up into this higher region of his being may be regarded as detachable from the man, and in relation to the final issues of life as a superfluous quantum.

De Perron said to one who sought his services, "If it is a matter of convincing, I am sufficient; but if it is converting, send for De Sales." Thus he drew a distinction which every man recognises as belonging to the centre of things. To silence our opponent is a task possible to every clever sophist possessed of brazen cheek and iron lungs. But to win the adhesion of the enemy, nay, to change him from a bitter foe to a passionate friend, is a tremendous task. It will test the resources of the most persuasive of mortals.

Religion never succeeds unless it has accomplished

this. Anything less is not victory, but a practical defeat. The rich young Ruler may be conscious of the beauty of the ideal offered to him; but so long as he turns away sorrowful, he has failed in his duty to the invitation of the highest. Jesus is never satisfied until the soul, down to its finest fibres, has been won for the divine service. And who can doubt that this is the better way? Certainly it effectually silences those of us who have thought of religion as claiming only a light allegiance. It disposes of the notion that the gospel is merely a collection of sweet sayings. But it suggests that we may have here an impelling energy capable of translating life into higher values. It implies that here is the one instrument which can mould the masses of men after the model of a wholesome manhood.

Let us then dismiss the notion that we can reject Jesus and retain the religion He has founded. "Time was, when the brains were out the man would die," moans Macbeth in his remorseful agony. That ancient rule still holds good for other than physical forms of existence. Pluck out the heart from the body and no amount of galvanism will animate the inert limbs or stir dumb lips to speech. Why should we expect that this miracle will be performed for us in the realm of religion? Jesus is the heart of the gospel. The systole and diastole movement from the centre to the extremities can only be continued while He remains as the source of its pulsating vitality. Destroy belief in Him and you destroy the fountain whence has flowed the stream of life-giving energy which has animated His disciples. Only from the living can life ever come. The dead never procreate themselves. If, then, we would keep the faith we must keep Him who has made the faith possible. We must revive and publish our confidence in the presence and rulership of Him whom Paul declared to be alive.

CHAPTER III

JESUS AND THE HUMAN WILL

IT would greatly assist our understanding of the claims of Jesus if we could decide in what court we are to make the appeal on His behalf. It is true that this claim is directed to the whole of man's being. We can hardly divide the human creature into segments, and apportion a particular part of his nature as the sphere over which religion is to rule. But a peculiarity of religious apologetics has been that in different ages it has emphasised some of the manifold appeals of religion at the expense of others. Sometimes it will be the emotional aspect of human nature to which the appeal is most confidently addressed. This has been the characteristic of most revivals. There has been a heavy emphasis placed on the authority of the affections. Powerful appeals have been made to the feelings, and the genesis of religion has been sought in a radical change of sentiments. Religion has been for many years limited in its evangel by an unwise insistence on this particular form.

It has enforced the need for a strong and catastrophic emotional change. But it is dangerous to throw into prominence this or any other factor in the constitution of a religion at the expense of its harmonic completeness. It may become like a man who suffers from a tumorous growth on his face, with the result that the whole outline of his countenance is spoiled.

At present we are suffering from the recrudescence

of religious intellectualism. It seems as though the future of Christianity is dependent upon its ability to present a perfectly consistent theory of the world. Its teachers seize with pathetic avidity every new suggestion of the philosophers which is likely to afford them a standing ground. Such assistance may come to them from the apparent failure of one of their ancient enemies. Or it may arise from the discovery of some new form of scaffolding by which their philosophic presumptions may be temporarily supported. In either case it is eagerly welcomed. One thing at least is clear at present. Men again recognise that religion does not approach the soul through the medium of the intellect alone. Psychology is suggesting to us once more that the main force in the government of human life is the will. According to Ladd, we are back to Aristotle, for will is primal in psychology to-day. We may dismiss the abstract question, whether the will of man is free. There is in man a genetic force, by the exercise of which he is able to make of himself a new cause, an original and active agent in the conduct of life. Once more we are discovering that the blackest pages of human history are not the product of the unenlightened intellect, but of the misguided and rebellious will. Where can we find a more fitting embodiment of the condition of the intellectual man than in the figure of Hartley Coleridge? His intellect was strong enough to accomplish all that was necessary for the creation of a rich and beautiful manhood. But the enfeebled will made of him one of life's derelicts. Already science seems to indicate that the will is the only spiritual reality. It may be the power lying behind all others, the nidus from which the divine energies of man must take their rise.

This helps us to appreciate the ethical reasons why we should accept Christianity. These press upon the soul of man with almost irresistible force, when considera-

tion is given to them. They appeal to that divine instinct within us which serves as the leaping point for all our moral advancements. By sheer weight of authority they find their admission to the spirit of man. It is to this ethical supremacy, not so much argued about as tacitly admitted by all classes of men, that we must dare to trust.

There is a distinction to be drawn between the belief expected from a man in relation to Socrates and that which is looked for in relation to Christ. The intellectual clarity of the Greek thinker, his superb gift of analysis, compel recognition from all competent judges. His decisions are like those of a highly qualified chemist. They find a response from all who can appreciate the elements which have entered into the judgment. But the teachings of Jesus are never offered as an appeal to the critical intelligence. They speak at once to the inner life of man. They move him altogether, if at all. They compel more than intellectual assent. They ask for a moral allegiance sufficiently strong to lead to a transformation of life.

For the accomplishment of this they must make their appeal to a power able to receive the impression of their full weight. This power must act as a transferring medium. It must convey to the whole being that which has been impressed upon itself. This is why the will must be the objective point to which the forces of religious appeal are directed. For if intellect, or feeling, is to be the arbiter of an eternal destiny, it will be difficult to develop any form of justice which will appeal to man. The distinctions in intellectual and emotional endowment are deep and wide. It is impossible to devise a system based on these alone by which the acts in this world of a human soul can justly decide his eternal destiny. Shakespeare and the draper's assistant on such a system are, then, simply not in the same universe. They belong

to different worlds, and must be judged by different categories. The one may have loved a White Lady, or he may have been guilty of an attachment which at least reflects no credit on his moral nature. But the draper's assistant must not expect to be judged by the same legal code as is applied to the poet. Thus we have the way opened for the pernicious doctrine that your man of genius is above the law. Byron may live like a pig in Venice. Napoleon may drive his chariot through all the commandments. Yet no man shall say him nay, since he is not in the category of the crowd. If the conduct of men is to be judged by their intellectual endowments, the ethical world may be overturned by the moral anarchist when he is so inclined. But it is different if men know that they are tested by the set and bias of their will. Then they recognise that justice which submits the soldier and the saint, the commoner and the patrician, to the same bar.

The spiritual energy of the world is connected now with will. Whatever hope of delivering morals and religion from the tyranny of arbitrary law may yet be left to us, it must be discovered here if anywhere. It is from the directed will that the new energies of the world must spring.

There is no hope for mankind save in so far as they are able to alter the direction of the human will. Other forms of energy may be resolved by science into their elements. The intellect may be so combined with material atoms, the fine line between matter and mind may be made so shadowy, that none can detect it. Our emotions may be but the expression of physical sensations, too subtle for us to discover. But there is in the core of our being a secret energy which refuses to be analysed. It rebels against every effort to resolve it into lower forms. It remains as the radical mark of our personal existence to the end. This is the target to

which the appeals of religion are to be directed. For here is the fountain of whatever there is of the spiritual in the universe. Luther believed God to be pure will. It was in strict conformity with this idea that he threw such a weight of responsibility in his theological thinking upon the element of will in man. The divine grace must have something to work upon. This was found at last in the central point of human identity, that will which makes man a self-directing and responsible person.

And his judgment is in agreement with those unconscious verdicts passed by men upon the heroes of the past. It has not been usually their breadth of intellect which has elicited the admiration of posterity. That which has drawn men towards the great has always been the direction in which their energies were moved. The goal after which they strove, though perchance they never attained to it, was more important than their speed. Of Philip Sydney it has been said that he was unsuccessful in everything he undertook. Yet he has left a name of resplendent glory behind him. Franklin may have failed to reach the object of his struggles, but his fame is not less a heritage for the race. It is by what men attempt rather than by what men achieve that the world summarises human worth. And what is this but the admission that there is a central factor in the life of man which decides his destiny, irrespective of his intellectual endowments.

This is the power in man to which the words of Jesus constantly appeal. Dean Church has expressed the wonder he felt that men did not see more clearly how severe a book the New Testament is. There is an idea abroad that it is but a compilation of writings chiefly distinguished by prettiness. This could only exist in the mind of a generation which reads the skim milk of rationalism, and has not time to read the words of Jesus or of Paul. The appeal of Jesus is invariably to the

central energies of humanity. There is no attempt to gloze the harsh realities of the actual world. Whoso imagines that Jesus has no desire but that of saying smooth things to men, of winning their allegiance by the destruction of the barriers which separate the good man from the bad, does not know the teacher. He has permitted himself to be victimised by one of the crudest delusions. Jesus never fails to hold before men the austere beauty of the moral ideal. There is no suggestion of paltering with these elements of eternal truth. He will not break down the barriers recognised by the conscience, either to propitiate the immoralist, or to win the languid approval of the artistic temperament.

One recognises in the teaching of Jesus His clear perception of the fundamental nature of will in relation to religion. In any form of argumentation there is always a certain stage in its development where the onus of decision is thrown entirely on volitional activity. All the reasons may be marshalled skilfully enough. The syllogism may be satisfactory according to all the canons of logic. But before the final judgment is uttered there must be an uprising of that central energy of the man, which we name will. From that tribunal the verdict will be at last delivered. The balancing of probabilities is the art most needed by him who would understand the fine and subtle questions which divide the allegiance of thinking men. Here a vast area belongs as of right divine to intellect unadulterated. But beyond this area must always be the ultimate decision. And this is wrested out of the hands of pure intellect and handed over to the care of that massed energy of the whole being which reveals itself in the utterance of will.

Bismarck utters the dictum that the politician must be content to wash his hands afterwards. There is the apology of the able man for all the roguery perpetrated in the name of State necessity. Men of much feebler

calibre than the German will regard that phrase as the justification of every trickery. It will be the best apology that the remorseless mind can make in its effort to secure a victory at any price. But the statesman ought to have known, and did know, that there need be no such necessity. To say that one cannot deal with scoundrels without adopting the tenets of rascaldom, is to admit that the honest man is eternally at the mercy of the rogue. That a man must do something, is quite different from saying that he may do something which is easier if he finds the other course too troublesome for him. Granted that you have the will of the righteous man, and these sophistries are not needed. Such a will refuses to bend to the temptations offered by power. It remains unbowed before any of those regnancies before which men so often kneel. It enables you to walk upright through a world which tries at every turn to allure you from your high allegiance.

The task of religion is to release the inward energies from the tyranny of the external and the temporary. Otherwise this will always powerfully shackle the activity of man. As Munsterberg puts it, religion is not an attitude in space or time, but in that inner world of which the soul is cognisant. It is liberation here which is needed by men. Granted this, and they are masters of any situation. Ethical complications may, by their intricacy, baffle all the efforts of ingenuity. They cease to disturb the serenity of the man who has discovered the freedom given to the soul by religion in its higher forms. He is delivered from the enchantments which tempt him to err from the plain path, Like Ulysses, he is deaf to all the entreaties of the syrens. He can drive ahead through the teeth of the gale, trusting in the intuitions of his own conscience. He knows that, so long as he is faithful to his own inner truth, no harm can befall him.

And he will remember for his comfort that wise word

of Bradley. He who seeks a reality more solid than the religious consciousness, demands he knows not what. This guarantees to him that reality is beneath his feet. And Jesus convinces him that firm foothold is given by the affirmations of his own soul. The will to truth and righteousness within him is hourly strengthened. Thus he is equipped for all the sharp engagements of the waking day. And this inward preparation is accomplished for him by Christ. He finds in Him the reinforcement of power.

Feuerbach makes God the object of feeling rather than of thought. In so doing he is in line with the great tradition of the faith. His words find an echo in the breast of man. But this can only be so long as it is understood that the feeling is not a mere vague sentiment or a dreamy reverie. It must include the whole plexus of those emotions which make us men. There are occasions in the life of our poorest specimens of the human creature when the force coiled up within him will reveal itself in some unexpected act of sacrifice. Then the weakling becomes a giant in his strength. The despised dwarf shoots up into a figure of majestic proportions. It is then that the divine within our manhood shows itself, and convinces us that we are made in the likeness of God.

Some tinge of this sentiment was in the mind of Henry IV. when he said, "Those who serve conscience are of my religion, and I am of the religion of all who are brave and good." There are deeps within us which are not uncovered to the casual glance of the passer-by. They shrink into the silences and dim valleys of the inner life. Yet who has not felt in the few moments of his true manhood that these are what constitute him a person? To allow these hidden forces full and free play, is to be of the blood of those who are near to God.

Here is where the personal impact of Jesus upon the

soul is felt. Gibbon could hardly deny the moralising influence of Christianity upon the decadent civilisation of Rome. But it is not so much the effect of the religion with which we are here concerned. That might be regarded as detachable from the person of its founder. It is the influence exerted by Jesus Himself upon men which is of first importance. He has been the main agent in strengthening the human powers productive of righteousness. It was easy for Nietzsche to counsel the men of his generation to be hard. But who is to guide men so that when they are hard, their severity shall be socially beneficent? To be hard to others is a lesson which needs no inculcating upon the spirit of man. All the dispositions of his manhood lead him in that direction. But to make his hardness applicable to himself, to develop a noble asceticism, has been the purpose of every moralist from Epictetus to Mrs. Eddy. To render him immune from the virus of luxury and to create in him a spirit of compassion for the helpless, this is, indeed, the task of a Titan. Yet this is what Jesus has attempted to do. Whatever may be said of His success, there is no doubt of His purpose. All His efforts have been directed towards the subjection of a frantic egoism to the general weal. He has at least tried to chain the tiger and the ape, that the man within might be revealed.

Let it not be said that this task of energising the will to good can be neglected, since there is a spontaneous evolution towards a righteous ideal. That seems to be an absurd suggestion in the light of present-day realities. The difference in moral insight between past and present is not very large. Do we suppose ourselves to have acquired moral perceptions entirely hidden from former generations? Have we all become saints because we no longer encourage prize-fighting?

Granted that the crimes of a Borgia are an offence to the conscience of to-day. Is it that we have moved,

by an unconscious transition, out of the mental orbit of Alexander's fierce brood? Believe it not. What of the crimes committed by railway magnates of our time? Perhaps a larger quantity of human misery may be attributed to the present controllers of the world's forces than can be counted against the worst of the Popes. We have driven some evils underground. We have made men ashamed of certain forms of wickedness. But only an inhabitant of Bedlam can imagine that by the mere onward rolling of the globe the moral energies of men are quickened. No; it was probably quite clear to Borgia himself that he was a scoundrel. One need not be an acrimonious critic of religion to understand that. And an ecclesiastical dignitary of our time guilty of his deeds would deserve precisely the same condemnation. Simony and homicide are not of any age or clime. If our conscience has been quickened, it is by the labours of men who had no thought of the cost. They were prepared to pay any price if only they might win the approval of their hidden Lord. The martyrs to goodness, in whatever form their oblation has been offered, are the seminal sources of our moral development.

This is what justifies us in giving credence to Christ. He has succeeded in enormously invigorating the will of man in its effort after goodness. It is true, as Wendt says, that the body of teaching in the New Testament is so convincing that it stands by its own weight. But that body of teaching is only one of the media through which the influence of Jesus reaches the mind of the age. The whole force of His personality is felt by the best minds in any generation. All their efforts to make goodness something more than a dream are supported by His presence. The authority of conscience is so invigorated that it becomes itself the divine oracle. The man struggling to be obedient to the heavenly vision is reinforced by an irresistible tide. The tasks that seemed hopeless

in hours of gloom are fulfilled with a joyous freedom. The removal of mountains is as easy as the lifting up of the hands. For such a man knows that the combined forces of the universe are with him. They urge him, as the force of gravitation draws a planet or a pebble, on the path of righteousness and peace.

It is obvious, then, that Jesus is not here simply to clear up some of the perplexities of intelligent men. His task is much more vital than that. He has come that He may show men on which side they should stand. In the moral issues of life He gives the clearest indication of His meaning. It is when dealing with these that we receive an apprehension of the authority with which He can speak. There is no disposition on His part to shelve the responsibility. Wherever men are troubled with the conflicts of life there He may be met with. His answer to their questionings is invariably one which leads them to loyal service in a righteous cause.

It has been acutely said of John Inglesant, that his life is blameless; but one does not perceive the safeguards. Yet there is obviously some power by which the man is kept free from the vices of the world. But what is this but to admit that there is a spiritual life independent of visible agencies. That life, originating in the Christ revealed in the Scriptures, may exist and thrive without constant dependence upon external instruments. The force which maintains the life of the saint is not of necessity bound up with anything earthly. Christ speaks to man in a private and peculiar manner, as Browning claimed that God spoke to the musician. This intimacy of the soul with its Master is the spring of whatever is lovely in those who know Him as their friend.

Thus we all acknowledge the description given by Jacobi of human needs. Men have felt that they not only need a truth whose creator they are, but still more a truth of which they are the creatures. They require

some overmastering kingship before which they must bow. The mood in which they can defy the omnipotent to arms, and aver that their head is bloody yet unbowed, is not common. They are more frequently aware of their own weakness. They feel the need of some conscription which will make them into what Heine called knights of the Holy Ghost. They would be drawn by a celestial magnetism into allegiance to God.

No one has done this so effectively as Jesus. Why, then, should we discard a faith which can accomplish this for man? Why repudiate the one Person who can bring the soul of man into subordination to God's will? Men need something to strengthen them against the wiles of evil. Else they are drawn away to their certain damage and frequent ruin. Have we found any substitute who can be compared with Jesus? What other agent can strengthen man's will in his warfare against the wrongs of the world? We know of none. Why, then, not confess that we are dependent upon One who prepares men for the spiritual conflict into which they must plunge?

CHAPTER IV

JESUS AND THE WORLD'S PAIN

AROUND the problem of pain an immense literature has gathered. Yet it remains as the central interrogation, the unsolved riddle before which all thinkers admit incompetence. Of the attempts made by these thinkers there is, indeed, no end. But of none of them can we say that they accomplish more than to supply us with brave phrases and sounding words; they bring no genuine comfort to the mind. It is true, for instance, that men are hastened to maturity by the endurance of misfortune. *Merimée* was justified in the assertion of this moral truism. But the result of that process of education can have no permanent value for one who, like the sad-eyed Frenchman, has rejected all those larger hopes which spring from the possession of faith.

Shall we find an explanation of the pain of the world in the judgment of the Syrian king? He declared that he was unhappy because no unhappiness was sent to him by the gods. There is a state of the soul which is difficult to bear, where the mere monotony of living, without the bitter pungency of pain, becomes at last unendurable. Then men clutch the means of causing anguish as if they had found a treasure. They desire to make themselves sensitive to suffering in order that they may feel the rapture of living. The misplaced feather in the couch of the princess may be the way of escape from a monotonous felicity. But this is not the attitude of

those who are best acquainted with the thoughts of Christ. For in His judgment upon life there is evident a deep sense of the goodness of mere living. He accepts the gifts of existence as the benefactions of an all-wise Creator. This conviction would save him from the mistake of seeking for a pain which did not come to him along the broad path of duty.

Like all those who have confronted the facts of human existence, he knew that pain may be necessary to deepen life. Most of us live in the shallows until we have experience of the harsher forms of affliction. The endurance of positive physical or mental anguish compels us to seek for the profounder meanings of existence, and so leads to an apprehension of the true meaning of human life.

It is the glory of Christianity that it has made the suffering of the world something more than a mere tale of wrong without meaning. When we look at the pain of life in its relation to the gospel, we see that beneath it all there runs the idea of sacrifice. The world is not to be redeemed simply by the efforts of those who would save mankind from the endurance of physical distress. That their efforts are deserving of approval, that such men are, indeed, amongst the best of God's workers, goes without saying. But we need release from the idea that there is no loftier condition attainable by man than that of entire immunity from bodily discomfort. For the bearers of pain are themselves helpers in that redemption of the race which was the guiding thought of our Saviour. The poor creature struggling with the pain of the body, bearing the anguish of nerve and bone without complaint, is an unconscious worker in the cause of human redemption. Such have been labouring from the beginning for the elevation of the human race. There is no sick chamber in which there cannot be found some sign of that regenerative process by which the soul is seen to be

triumphant over the body. The examples of patience thus afforded to mankind, the energy of soul thus generated, are amongst the most valuable possessions of the human race.

For, indeed, the life of man is bound up with pain. Birth and death alike are linked to the questions which the pressure of this terrible suffering forces upon the mind. Whoever helps us to understand this and to find an answer to our interrogations, proves himself one of our greatest benefactors. Science has already done much to make intelligible some of the grave problems which gather about this question. It has taught us that pain is one of the mightiest protective agencies we possess. Those twitchings of the sensitive nerve, those keen pangs which run through the body in times of disease, are often the most effective warnings men can have of the approach of some enemy to human welfare. When men have lost the ability to feel acute pain, they have entered upon the most dangerous period of life. There is not one of the militant foes of our health which may not then find a lodgment within the system. The sensitive nerves that once acted as sentinels are no longer at their post. The way is open to our foes, and they may enter in without let or hindrance to do their deadly work.

We have learned also that there is no means for the attainment of a higher stage of development which is not related in some manner to the pains of the world. From the sharp pang which the child may feel, those growing pains of which we heard and felt so much in our youth, to the travail of the woman bringing a child into the world, there is no advance made either by the individual or the race which is not dependent upon the endurance of pain.

The man who has escaped from the ordinary inflictions of humanity usually remains in the moral condition into which he has been born. He has found a peace which

is but another name for death. He who would live in the world's life must take his share of the world's pain.

There is a germ of truth in that cynical phrase of Nietzsche, that the pleasure of making another suffer may at some time constitute the charm of life. But that can only be permanently true in a deeply debased period, or in the case of one who has given himself over to the corruption of natural feelings. Men who are normal in their mental constitution are not likely to surrender themselves to these diabolic passions. They will continue to view with amazement the moral perversity which delights in the torture of others.

We live in a sensitive age. Men are more easily moved to a consciousness of their own sufferings than in former times. So well protected have we been for generations, that when the cruelties of life are brought home to us in our personal experience we feel ourselves bitterly aggrieved. We wonder what we have done to deserve the hatred of those who administer the gifts of life. It is true that there are many cases reported every year of cruelty to children. The parental instincts may still seem to be dead in some of those who are privileged to possess the guardianship of the young. That story of harsh and unnecessary suffering which Henry Stanley has related as forming the chief memory of his own boyhood, may, perhaps, still be duplicated in the life of our time. But there has grown up a sentiment of dislike for the infliction of unnecessary pain which shows itself in our legislation for children and in our care for the criminal. Whatever its defects, this proves that we are more sensitive to the suffering of the world than were the men who went before us. Mr. Squeers may still exist, but he must hide himself from the public gaze if he would escape universal detestation. And Dr. Busby would find few persons in our day to agree with his method of

indoctrinating his scholars with the elements of the classic tongues.

Indeed, there is a rebellion in the mind of man against even those natural cruelties which we used to regard as inevitably associated with the genesis and maintenance of life. The anguish of maternity has been mitigated by the ministrations of science until a great part of its terror has been taken away. The curse which Hunter pronounced upon civilisation—that civilisation which makes cats eat their kittens, and women put their children out to nurse—may still represent the judgment of the man who lives in the midst of our poverty-stricken populations. But the ground for anger is being partially removed by the efforts of those who have made themselves the helpers of the weak and the protectors of the poor. The one charge which cannot be brought to-day against the majority of decent men is, that they are indifferent to the pains borne by their fellows in the struggle for life.

On the other hand, it is understood now that much of the pain we suffer is the result of our culture. An irreducible minimum is bound up with the existence of a highly developed sentient being. It is the needful complement of our keener self-consciousness. Because we are creatures who can look before and after and pine for what is not, we realise, with Eucken, that pain may be necessary to deepen life. The fountains which lie buried within the soul may only begin to spring and flow forth when its keen touch has been laid upon the quivering nerve. Our finest feelings may lie paralysed until some unexpected sorrow has laid our cherished happiness in the dust like a ruined palace of delight. It is to speak nonsense to assert that this purgative and refining effect of pain is a mere hallucination. The noblest literature of the world is steeped in that philosophy which recognises that out of the sorrows of life there come still higher

joys. The weary feet of the wanderer have too often trod the Via Dolorosa, to discover the House Beautiful at the end of the journey, for men to believe that the sufferings of life are without any cleansing influence upon the soul. It may be easy for the contented to explain that they feel no need for such a process of culture through tribulation. They may rebel against the authority which subjects them to it. But the fact still holds that the steel is sharpened by friction. The unceasing attrition of the waters is needed to wear away the sharp and jagged edges of the rocks.

There was some justification for that despairing exclamation which fell from the lips of the dying Desportes, "I have thirty thousand a year, and yet I am dying." When the full cup of Fortune's favours has been held out to men and then suddenly snatched away, their indignation is not surprising. Put some ingredient into the chalice which turns the red wine into bitter wormwood, and the saint may quarrel with his lot. Man may be pardoned for his momentary rebellion against that jealousy of the gods which seemed so obvious a thing in ancient times. But this is not the experience of the majority of men. For most of us it is true that we can watch the summer dissolve in the mellow fruitfulness of autumn, without the hideous fear that all our ripe abilities for enjoyment will be destroyed ere another season can come round. We do not stand, like poor Keats, in helpless dejection and watch the name that has been "writ in water" fade into the oblivion we so much dread. And for those of us who are thus permitted to enjoy some of the fair fruits of the world's life, it is good that the lash of the satirist should fall upon our morbid fancies and recall us to the actualities of existence.

It need not be regarded as a recrudescence of ancient Judaism if we quote again Arnold's dictum that medical

science has never gauged the intimate relations between fault and disease. The physicians of our time have an often painful knowledge of a side of life which is wisely hidden from the young. They have too many opportunities of discovering that this relationship exists. Certain moral offences entail in their consequence pains and penalties appalling in their intensity. This may seem to be a cruelty on the part of the world's Ruler which effectively annihilates His claim to be beneficent. But consider the happiness which is wrecked through these errors. Look at the entire lack of necessity for their committal. Think of the many inducements which are offered to the offender to desist from his perilous path. Can you then say that the penalty attached to the offence is manifestly too hard? Life has put a premium on moral cleanliness. The plain precepts of the past, the instructions of the aged, the teachings of our own experience, all lead alike to one conclusion. They tell us that a man ought to keep himself pure from the viler contaminations of the world. It is a bracing rather than depressing thought that we may frequently heal ourselves and others if we have the courage to deal faithfully with the situation. There are many persons who would have had a much larger share of happiness in life if they had not been permitted, without a single word of sharp warning about the perils of the path they had selected, to give Nature cause for wreaking a terrible revenge.

And should we not sometimes remember that the pains and griefs from which we suffer may have their origin in sources beyond the skill of any medical practitioner? Huxley admitted that his experience in London hospitals taught him that there were times when the clergyman might be more effective as a therapeutic agent than the doctor. Every curator of souls knows that there are many cases of physical distress which need not so much the attention of the skilled physician as the wise

word of the minister of God. "Prove to me," said a nervous sufferer to his physician, "that God loves me, and I will leave this place a well man." There are unfortunates who suffer from agoraphobia, to whom an open space is more terrifying than a wilderness. They require the strength which comes from the conviction that their life is in the hands of a beneficent Creator.

"Hastened to maturity by misfortune" is the judgment of the wise. The maturity may be that of the sad-eyed sceptic, but it may also be that of the believer, to whom there have been given wings of fire that carry him across the weary seas of life. But it is a schooling through which most men must pass ere they enter into possession of the wisdom which will not betray.

Of many a man it is true, as one said of his friend, "He died of adversity, sir." But there are few who have not found that out of these barren places of life they could pluck flowers of unfading asphodel. Theirs is the knowledge which passes the wit of pedant or pietist. It is not acquired without preparation of the spirit. There are many men with us who shrink from this philosophy. They feel that life ought to be made at all points as easy and charming for the children of men as a play hour for the pupils of a school. Such men would escape from the acerbities of life. They avoid all exposure to the pelting of the storm. Any person wearing the sad sackcloth robe is forbidden to enter into the sacred precincts of their habitation. This is a theory of life which men have always practised in their hours of feeble respiration, when the soul is scarcely half alive. But the mass of humanity must needs live in the open and hear the ravings of the storm. They have always known that the austerities of life are not without their meaning. And they have welcomed the cold cheek of March as lustily as the soft embracements of an August noon.

Such men have thrilled to the moral courage of

Goethe's mother, that brave and lonely woman who saw so little of her cold-hearted son. In her solitude she would comfort herself by asking, "Dost want to walk upon roses for ever?" For these men have learned that the true and tender virtues belong to the north. Out of the Arctic wastes, where wild winds blow around the Pole, and not by the sunlit shores of Baiæ Bay, the virile energies of the world must always come. Therefore, these men bare their breast to the storm. They accept the bruising of life with a stubborn belief in their ultimate worth to the soul. Giving their heart to the Purifier and their will to the will that governs the universe, they are content to take life upon the terms of the Ineffable Giver.

What, then, is it that Jesus has to teach us concerning this mystery of pain? The teaching is not to be found in definite statements. It is rather in the manner in which He Himself met this form of the world's trouble. More impressive even than the Teacher's words will be His deportment before the harsh reality of life.

About one point it is not necessary to argue. Jesus was keenly sympathetic towards all those who were bearing pain either of body or mind. There was about Him nothing of that hardness sometimes seen in the faces of those who have meditated over human suffering. He was tender with all who had borne the sharper inflictions of life. It may be difficult to be patient with the lamentations of the neurasthenic sufferer. To tell the young man to cure his toothache by working it off is easy but unprofitable. Gladstone did that on one occasion. That is poor consolation to those who have felt the burden of life. It does not make easier the more poignant sufferings of bone or brain. From this defect of temper Jesus is singularly free. He saw that life may be little more than a charnel-house to some of the disabled.

Nor did He seek to escape from the pressure of the world's tortured children. He left them only for that rest without which He could not continue His work of healing. In this respect He is a fixed example. For some would try to mitigate the world's anguish, but lack the courage to look steadily at its running sores. The selfishness which muffles the cry of agony has no approval from Him. We know how easily this can be done. Skilfully enough we apologise to ourselves for the cruelty we thus tolerate. Men who thus act are not of necessity hard of heart. But they shrink from what is obnoxious to their fine sensibilities. They are not cruel. But out of their acute sensitiveness they develop a frame of mind which is deeply indurated, like finely wrought iron, against any appeal from the world's afflicted children. They are not hostile to the sufferings of men. But they take care to be remote from their insistent claims. Jesus never was guilty of this unconscious cruelty. Where the children of men could be found crushed beneath the weight of an anguish which defied all healing, Jesus was near. This courage of the physician fears no spectacle, however distressing to the mind. It hides no dread reality from the eye, however repugnant to the taste; and it offers to men an example more valuable, through its possible influence upon our character, than the contribution of the skilled anatomist, to our knowledge of the human frame. For it is out of this character that we develop our new attitude towards the writhing children of pain.

Jesus has a clear consciousness of the truth that suffering is a necessary factor in the life of man. Change the circumstances of men as we may, there will still be a bitter necessity for the acceptance of pain. No amount of intellect applied to the condition of humanity is likely to liberate the masses of men from this compulsion. They will still be under the necessity of bearing that

suffering so familiar to us all. All the mitigating influences brought to bear upon the life of man have not yet banished anguish from the world. Many discoveries may be made by men in days to come. But it is difficult to believe that for any, except the elect few, there can be release from this warfare.

Jesus is not deluded on this point. He knows that men will feel the stings of physical anguish as long as the world lasts. Nor does He cheat Himself with the belief that as we spread our sensibility, so to speak, over a wider area, the susceptibility to feeling will grow less intense.

One phase of this question is especially worthy of our attention. We often forget that the pain which we view in the mass is felt individually. It falls upon our mind's eye as an accumulation of suffering too vast to be borne in patience. But it is, after all, subdivided and distributed over a wide area. It is borne by a number of different creatures. The spectacle of a battlefield may be almost unendurable. It may move even the iron soul of a Wellington to tears, as he views the destruction caused by the stakes and swords of Badajoz, or looks at the heaps of brave men, soon to be but mouldering dust, who cover the plains of Waterloo. But these massed quantities need to be mentally subdivided into their components if we would get a true view of the situation. The torture of a broken limb, the horrible agony of the man who lies with his body torn in pieces while yet the heart continues to beat, is felt only by the sufferer himself. Each bears his own measure of the aggregated suffering found on the battlefield. Look at the tormented creatures who line the wards of a cancer hospital. We are appalled at such an accumulation of horrors. And, indeed, if it were possible to concentrate the agony of the multitude into one the result would drive us mad.

We often seem to do this in the processes of our

thought. And there is no escape from the impression of hopeless agony made by such a spectacle. But if our judgment of the facts is to be a fair one, we must act differently. We must divide the suffering into its individual sections. Each person before us bears but one portion of the aggregated mass. Let this be carried through in our study of the world's pain. It does not alter the fact that we need all our self-control to stand before what we see, and to think calmly about its implications. But it may give us some relief from the crushing sense of human helplessness, before the inevitable sufferings of life.

Jesus was free from the vice of the pietist. He did not seek for pain as a moral corrective. But He accepted it when it came across His path in the performance of some clear duty. His followers have not been as innocent in this connection as their Master. They have sometimes alleged it to be part of a disciple's duty to inflict pain, since by bearing it they became morally stronger.

Numerous sects, during the Christian era, have made physical maceration one of their cardinal tenets. They have certainly illustrated the strength of the ascetic impulse amongst men. Flagellants and Eunuchs have been more abundant amongst religious people than was ever necessary or desirable.

It is not an ignoble trait in our humanity that we should welcome suffering and eschew pleasure. It dwells by the side of those impulses whence come the noblest deeds of sacrifice. Yet it is unfortunate that it should so often have been connected with the religion of Jesus as to suggest that He put a premium on self-inflicted suffering. His outlook upon life was altogether too sane for any such belief to earn His commendation. He welcomes suffering only when it is necessary in some form of useful service,

And therefore every endeavour made by men to mitigate the pain of mankind would have His cordial commendation. He would recognise that the true physician or surgeon, whose purpose is primarily the healing of diseases, is one of the noblest workers in a true humanitarianism. The disposition to minister to the needs of the body, the belief that the couch of pain should be made as soft as human limitations will permit, would receive the approval of the Master.

Beautiful and pathetic beyond words is that speech of the dying St. Francis, in which he voices his regrets for having been harsh to his brother the ass, since he had maltreated and abused his body. If for no other word or deed but that humble recognition of his own frailty and his kinship to the sheath in which his soul had been confined, he would deserve to be held in perpetual remembrance. For he warns all of us who have ears to hear against the same egregious folly. We, too, may abuse our poor brother the ass. We may imagine that we are doing God great service, when we are only yielding to a foolish predilection for exalting one side of our nature at the expense of the other.

Not in the words of that gracious Master whom he so boldly followed would the lover of beast and bird have found excuse for his needless self-torture.

Still further, Jesus gives us a guarantee that the qualities engendered in the soul through the endurance of pain are not lost. They form part of that inalienable heritage which we are to take with us when we pass from this world to an ampler life. Goethe has told us that it is our destiny here to make things that are temporal into things eternal. We may give them enduring value by taking them up into ourselves and thus transfiguring them. This enabled him to declare that there was no reason why one piece of work should not be as important as another. Each might help in the creation of the only

form of riches capable of enduring the shock and change of death. Whether a man should spend his time as a shoemaker or an artist in words was not of first importance if viewed in the light of this exalted purpose. We know that men have acquired graces of character through the endurance of human suffering or through the acceptance of those limits set to human ambition by the disabilities of the body. And we may rest assured that no pain is entirely without result in the chastening and refining of the human spirit.

But this can only have meaning for those who have accepted the central thought of Jesus. They must believe with Him that there is something in man, an ego, a soul, to adopt the old and hallowed phraseology, which can resist the touch of death, and remains the imperdurable root of our human existence, even when the body has been blended with the dust.

It is not an idea which finds general acceptance in our time. The mechanistic theories of life and thought have exercised devastating sway for the last half-century. And the majority of intelligent persons would probably confess to a grave dubiety as to the existence of any radical essence corresponding to the soul of man. But already there are signs amongst the best heads of the time of discontent with this mental mood. The many theories which have fought for precedence with Animistic doctrine are proving more than ever unsatisfactory. The work done by James Ward and Dr. M'Dougall in recent years has already borne fruit. One after another the explanations of man's being which have been advanced as substitutes for the doctrine of soul life have been subjected to criticism. Leaders of thought see that their expectation of the whole universe, including the mind of man, being explained in purely mechanical terms may remain only an impious hope. As an hypothesis it has no more foundation on which to ground its enormous

claims than the most daring assumption of the pre-scientific theologian.

Here, then, is what Jesus accomplishes for those who accept His axiomatic beliefs. He delivers us from the tyranny of pain by giving us a reason to bear it; He reiterates the judgment of our own instincts; He gives to them regal authority, confirming our belief that suffering may be the furnace of the soul. Through Him we know that the martyr's anguish is not wasted. We learn from Him that the contortions of the agonised body, the miseries of the perplexed and hesitating mind, are by no means fruitless. For they may be made accessories in the education of the human spirit. They aid in the preparation of the human soul for yet more difficult adventures and loftier flights.

This is the nobler Stoicism, at once strong and tender, which we learn from Christ. Here is a loyalty to life which will refuse nothing and deny nothing. This high courage can confront the Unknown abysses with purged eyes. Yet it never forgets to be pitiful to those who are less masculine in their confidence and hope. And it comes to us as the rich inheritance purchased for men by the Sufferer of Gethsemane and Calvary. The answer of the modern world to the mystery of human pain must be the answer given by the Man of Sorrows. He who listened to all the moaning anguish of the world was not afraid. He saw the shambles beneath the ballroom floor, the worm-bleached cemeteries below the crocus-covered sward, and averred that the inner meaning of it all was an invincible and triumphant Love.

PART V.—SOCIAL

CHAPTER I

JESUS AND CONSTRUCTIVE EFFORT

WHAT is the effect on a logical person of rejecting the hopes associated with Christianity? Work out its ultimate issues, and he reaches a pessimism fatal to all constructive effort. There must arise in his mind the belief that rebellion is the only position for an honest man. He would be hostile to all those conventions by which the world has been governed for so long. The functionaries of the State would be to him the messengers of an alien power. To the claims of the community upon him for service and obedience he would give an emphatic refusal. Remind him that he has been born into a communal life, that he forms part of a penetrating and extended unity. He answers contemptuously that he did not desire the privilege. He despises this mob of chattering bipeds, with their screaming demands for homage. From now onward he proposes to ignore this contemptible race. He hopefully anticipates the day when it will pass to the oblivion for which it is bound.

Speak to such a man of the claims of religion. He answers that the charlatanry parading under that name is a thing accursed. He sees it as the parent of lies. By it the human mind has been baulked of true knowledge. He sees in every minister of religion a party to

a colossal fraud. The anti-clerics find in him a doughty champion.

Even that spirit which at times rises within his own breast, the spirit of worship, of reverence for that immaculate goodness which has hung before the soul like a star through the night's long travail, he will distrust and hate.

Is it not another of those spectral figures deluding the mind of man and cheating him of his right of prey? He will see in these risings of the better man within, the recrudescence of hideous superstitions. Against them he will exert all his strength that the manacles may be forever broken. Shall even the affections of the heart train him to bondage? Shall he cease to hate life because he has followed the way of his fathers and found a wife and children? These are only added instruments of torture. Let him love them never so blindly, it does but mean a keener agony when they lie down in the dust. Sweet ties uniting men to the hearth, serve as ropes to drag rebels in a well-marked path. What are they but another invention of society to keep him subject? They would hinder him escaping from the dependence to which chance has condemned him.

It will be said that such results are impossible. The constructive instinct of society would prevent these wild ideas ever becoming general. But this is one of the barest possibilities. On what grounds may a man comfort himself with this reflection? After all, society is made up of a number of units. Each of these is capable of individual feeling and thought. Is it to be understood that there is no reality corresponding to the so-called spiritual faculty in man? Is it known that the fruits of the intellect spring from a combination of physical accidents? Then what reasons are there why a man should continue to endure life's bruising? The door is open. Why should he not pass through it? Unless history is false, the condition of the masses of workers in

all countries must for a long time to come be one of partial imprisonment, with repulsive labour. No radical reformation in the condition of Europe's millions can be made within any measurable distance of time. Such a hope can only be entertained by the ignorant or the wilfully blind. Let Science invent all that she can. Selfish men will secure the benefits for themselves. Increase wealth by the discovery of new natural resources. Yet the result can only be a slight improvement in the conditions of life. The real benefits will accrue to the superior classes of society. We shall see increased expenditure upon luxuries. The rake and the dude will be more extravagant. The toilers will become more discontented. Behold your Earthly Paradise!

Is an increased five shillings a week in wages to alter this? Will the prospect of that munificent sum being awarded to the servant of the State at the end of forty years' toil make the difference between one conception of life and the other?

Why do our statesmen not understand the futility of this tinkering process? The growth of knowledge is making this cheap solatium impossible and contemptible? Men are not asking now whether they can with difficulty earn a bare subsistence. They are not anxious for a long life on meagre fare and in limited surroundings. What they want to know is whether it is at all worth while continuing this farce of an existence? It will take more than the Shrovetide pancakes baked in Westminster to reconcile these men to life. They are not enamoured of a lifelong slavery in conditions for which they are not responsible.

It seems probable that Christianity is the final experiment in the making of great religions. There may be, as Zangwill and others are fond of suggesting, fresh forms of faith, which will have their scattered lieges throughout the world. But it is unlikely that there will

come again one of those faiths which can transform the character of a people. Has Science dismissed the hope on which Christianity has been founded? Then she has also proved the impossibility of any similar hope being gratified in the future. She has hung before us a veil like that which concealed the face of Isis. None will now be permitted to enter the penetralia where are kept the mystic runes which answer man's pathetic questions.

Is it suggested that Science will also have her mysteries and Priests? Shall we have another religion, based upon scientific fact? Will there come from this a cult and a hierarchy? Trust no such fallacious dream. Democracy will never again permit its leaders to officiate at an altar, to connive with the learned and impose upon the masses of mankind. The printing press will at least have made it impossible for all to be deceived. There cannot again be the secret grove and the holy temple, either at Delphi or elsewhere. With this departure of secrecy there goes the last hope of founding a religion upon falsehood.

Men, therefore, will be driven to confront the sombre facts of their existence. They will find that they have no reason to look for a continuance of soul-life which the animal races do not equally possess. They will discover no pretext for the hope that in some future life the injustices of this world will be rectified. Instead of comforting themselves with these mephitic dreams they will accept the wretched reality. Life will become the supreme curse inflicted by an unknowable Ruler on the creatures who traverse these dim-lit wastes of time.

It is true that there are some who seem to have been smiled on by Fortune. Yet they are often keenly conscious of the disparity between the promises of life and its miserable incompleteness. The lives of the great make sad reading, when we see these famous ones confronting the stark reality of death. They watch the

failure of their powers. Their growing sense of inefficiency becomes a pain. The prospect of their place in the world's army of workers being taken by the men of a younger generation, brings them many a pang of wounded self-esteem. However they may conceal their disaffection, their anger against the inevitable law is only too clearly apparent. Look at their disgust with a generation which is growing beyond their knowledge. Alas for the Joseph who was once the chief figure of his age! Or what is more pathetic than the spectacle of the old clinging to the power which once was theirs? They stretch out trembling hands to grasp a sceptre they can no longer wield. Some posthumous authority they would exercise over the living, when they themselves have become but a memory and a name.

Some one has described the aged Brougham watching children blowing soap bubbles. The old man is thinking of his own life, spoiled by his vanity, ruined by a querulous ambition. These things would not suffer him to rest contented in the shade. There is a sense of the vanity of all things which comes to men who have drained the cup of life's rarest pleasures to the dregs. It finds vent in the exclamation of Burke, "What shadows we are and what shadows we pursue." It stirs to their depths those who have been permitted to look upon the proud pageant of life. It adds a harsher note to the unwelcome call to retire from the public stage. Sadly they seek the consolations their lacerated spirits need in waiting for the inevitable end.

What is it that predominates in Memory, was asked of one who had been a well-graced actor on the stage of life. The answer came, fraught with all the sadness of expectations unfulfilled, "Hope baffled." That is the conclusion for which the proudest of men must be prepared. When the noise of the shouting and the strife of the captains has ceased, this is the end. Never more

can we feel the strain of our will against the tugging forces of the world. We must accept the tragically mean result. Our castles have proved but fantastic fabrics, fashioned of our feverish fancy.

This it is that gives such a melancholy tone to the lament of one man who will for ever be remembered. Bacon of Verulam was one of the greatest, if the meanest, of mankind. "My life has been passed in a strange land," he wails. "I wanted science, and in its stead I got politics." That was a poor substitute for pursuits which ought to have monopolised his genius and filled his days with quiet joy. Macaulay says that the man who, having the choice of literature or politics, chooses the latter, is a madman. By that dictum, Bacon is placed amongst those who have made the great refusal. He surrendered a costly treasure for the tinsel and frippery of an empty day.

This acknowledgment of the evanescence of things seen, the insatiable hunger of the heart for permanence, gives its emphasis to the exclamation of Huxley, "Death, the everlasting destruction of one's energies, is a thing horrible to contemplate." The higher we have ascended the greater must be our fall. Having gripped life with both hands, we resent its departure the more bitterly. Determined to extract from it all its sweetness, we hate the necessity which makes us drink the wormwood. We have kept our consciousness of vitality at its highest pitch through every moment of our existence. Keener than ever, then, will be the anguish with which we feel our grasp relax upon the reins of life. Bitterly we confess that others must soon guide the fierce steeds we struggled to control.

Perhaps amongst those bucolic peoples who live near to the good brown earth this change is not so harsh. For them life may consist in a succession of laborious days, with intervals of boisterous merriment. There

may be with them a gentle fading of the perceptive faculties, a bending downwards to the kindly clods of the valley, which will soon enwrap them. Life is lived on lower levels. The agonies and raptures of existence strike with less sharpness upon the soul. Death may come as the promise of a sleep which knows no fevered dreams, and is welcomed as the cool night after a sultry day.

But not thus do those feel who have kept their nerves taut as bowstrings to every wave of earthly sensation. They have lived in the centre of the vortex and felt the swift movement of the whirlpool. For them it means the extinction of so much that is precious. It is robbery by force of the things they depend upon and cherish. They enter on an experience of which they know so little, for which they are so unprepared, that they can only shrink affrighted from this new adventure.

The French have a name which is pregnant with pity for those who are the outcasts of society. They call such an one "A forget of God." But the examples of that divine forgetfulness ought not to be sought only amongst our social lepers. They might be found amongst those for whom Life has poured out all her wealth of delights. These aliens from home have travelled through the flowery gardens of existence. But they have not prepared themselves for the day when they must leave it and start, empty-handed and naked to the pelting of every storm, on the long journey which begins with death.

It is necessary, then, for men to find some reason for living. Without this they will neither joyously accept nor patiently endure what life may bring. The world needs a source of hopefulness capable of defying the withering heats of experience. It must keep its springs unsullied and freely flowing as long as men may wish to drink of its waters. The Eastern monarch, thinking of

himself as the guardian of his people, the surety for their happiness, had engraved upon his currency, "This coin of Akbar is the garment of hope." The raiment might seem poor enough to those who were brought into the presence of that ghostly Monarch whom no bribes can propitiate. But it recognised the need of men for a source of optimism beyond themselves. Yonder ill-clad gamin may be hoarding his last stiver against an hour when the pangs of hunger will be fiercer still. In the superscription of the Cæsar of his day he may find some guarantee of security against the world's inclemencies. But not with many such tokens can you appease the human craving for joy. There are those who, having more than abundance of the coin of the realm, yet moan out their lament that life is slipping from them. And of the Whither of it all, the purpose of life's labour pangs, they find no sufficient exposition.

Hear one who in our time has lived at the zenith point of life. He has felt the throbbings of life's vast sea, and has realised this need of a hope for the race if the human will is still to be kept on the strain. "The hope of the future," says Mr. A. J. Balfour, "must be found in the combination of pure science and industry." Out of this marriage of two Titanic forces there must be born the hope for the coming days. Belief in the amelioration of human woes, in the creation of an ideal future world, must rest on these. A gigantic power is thus invoked as the Perseus who shall break our shackles and set us free from threatening monsters. But whether even this will prove equal to the emergency is open to bitter questionings. For the note of our time is not only that of discontent with the ministrations of religion, obvious and clamant as that may be. Deeper and more insistent is the lamentation of those who have found that even these colossal energies cannot meet the demands men make upon the resources of life.

Men complain that the continual improvement of an earthly lot offers but a sterile prospect. For these advantages are to be reaped by a posterity which has not yet come into being. And this does not save the living man from the clutch of grim despair. For what is the moral value of a process which uses up the individual by millions, making of him only a means for the furtherance of other and impersonal ends? What claim on the respect of moral beings has that system which makes the responsible human being into an agent for the production of some more highly finished creature? If the broken shard could speak, might it not protest against the Potter who calls it into being only to throw it upon the rubble heap? To what end is this consummation of the nuptials of science and industry?

Is it to this that the scorers of the Nazarene's great dream would turn our hopeless eyes? Are we to be trampled in the mud and forgotten, that we may be the stepping-stones on which another race of human creatures may rise to higher things? We do not say that this may not be so. We know not whether in the eternal scheme of things it may not be the inevitable goal. The millions who now inhabit the earth and the countless milliards who have lived and died before us, may be the muck and silt which serves as the procreant bed of a grander race. From it there may emerge, in the long distant years, the white lily of a life as much fairer than aught that we have known, as Mont Blanc is higher than a Dutch sand dune. But will you publish this to men as a message of hope? Are we to surrender, for this airy vision of the mind, beliefs which have nerved the men of twenty centuries to heroic fortitude and filled the martyr's soul with fires more glowing than those which flamed around his funeral pyre? Shall we for this give up that faith in the divinity of the soul which we learned from the lips of Jesus Christ? Comparing these expositions

of life's meaning, we know not whether to marvel most at the bat-like blindness or the soaring presumption of those who offer us such dingy brass for our bright gold.

Well might Spencer say that the doctrine of evolution had not furnished him with guidance in ethics to the extent he had hoped. That great man was content to confess that of the ultimate tendency of things he knew nothing. As he had rejected the principle of faith, it was in strict accordance with his own thinking to deny any felicity in the future which could compensate for the struggle and pain which the process of development implied.

No Christian has a quarrel with the man who states his disbelief and then accepts the inevitable consequences of his own reasoning. But these creators of ideal worlds, these purveyors of prurient fiction and manufacturers of imaginative mechanisms, would escape from the results of their own intellectual judgments. They offer to us the prospective happiness of being made into manure, to fertilise fields on which at last shall grow the perfect produce of the human travail. And we ask what it is that we stand to gain by this exchange of a superstition rooted in the past, for a superstition which is rooted nowhere, but hangs amongst the wandering cloud-banks of an indefinite futurity.

Look, then, at what this means. Men will not be content unless they have some reason for living. The scorn of life is growing on the one side, amongst those who possess its treasures. The hatred of death, with its separation from the instruments of human delight, is increasing on the other. Men seek everywhere for one who can lead them beyond these conflicts of desire. They desire to find a reasonable cause why they should still continue to live while life is granted, why they should not fear to die when death may come. Inquire then where we may find such a Guide, where we are to look for such a fount of inspiration. Is there any

Figure known to men which will answer to all these complex needs as does Jesus of Nazareth? If hope is to be retained amongst men, if they are to confront the future with a belief that there is no final waste of rich material, they must turn to Him and listen again to His words of life.

Jesus justifies the worth of constructive effort. For He knows that every tiny accretion to the wealth of human endeavour leaves, like the stamp of a seal, its permanent impression on an enduring character. The form of humanity varies, its appearance changes with the flight of time, but there is that in man which resists all these encroachments on our spiritual freehold and draws from every act of resistance new and abiding worth. Let it be true that the sands of the desert hide the cities of old empires from our view. The labours of these men have not been fruitlessly squandered. Their bones are not the only memorial of their vanished greatness. They have contributed their portion to the spiritual life of the world. They have had their day, but do not cease to be. This is what the Master Himself believed. It is the rudiment of the faith which finds its centre in Him.

Jesus held before men the vision of a kingdom. Above the shadowy dynasties of time He puts an empire which knows no end. Within that kingdom every man counts for one. The qualifications of its citizens are neither birth nor culture. It is the one realm where the lowly may sit above the proud, and the gentle in spirit be exalted beyond the dignitaries of the world. No scion of a patrician house is prohibited from entrance. No bar sinister can exclude the candidate for honours in this aristocracy of the soul. It is open to the poorest emigrant that ever sailed to virgin lands. It offers free access to the humblest believer who finds in Jesus the Lord of life. The existence of this kingdom, its slow

but sure creation, is the guarantee that the labours of mankind are not as water spilt upon the ground. For all these toils of the peasant's body, these intellectual labours of the savant, these researches of the student into the constitution of the universe, react upon that spiritual life which is the crown of man's achievement. These things are lifted to their highest power when they are made subordinate to the culture of the divine in man. As the elements are transformed by central fires and incalculable pressures into hard and glittering diamonds, so are these rich treasures of the race made contributory to a brighter splendour. Shakespeare's song and Plato's thinking are glorified when seen as accessories to the human spirit's eternal welfare.

This is the one surety we can have of a final unity towards which the elements of life must move. At last all things shall be gathered together in Christ. There is a centre around which the powers of earth and heaven will circle. The age-long conflicts of men, the bitter hatreds which have held us captive for so long, will have played their part and then must cease to be. Those infantile presentments of a future bliss, which the brush of the Medieval painter depicted in such boldly anthropomorphic fashion, are not without importance as suggestive aids to the imagination. When Dante enters the Empyrean there falls on him a blindness, which is at last removed, that he may look on the glories prepared for the saints of God. True picture of the failure of all speech to set forth that which God hath prepared for them that love Him! One thing at least is sure. The jangling chords of life will then be tuned to the harmony they have not known on earth. The loneliness of lust and hate will have given place to the sodality of love.

CHAPTER II

JESUS AND IDEALS OF CONDUCT

IN the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant laid the foundations of a scepticism more searching even than that of Hume. Under the hammer and chisel of the remorseless critic the boasted reason of man seems to totter to its fall. But when the sternest work of the critic has been accomplished, and the fair fabric lies a heap of wreckage at his feet, he begins to build again. He constructs a world at once intelligible and endurable. And he does it by using the imperatives of the moral sense as his foundations. This method seems like an insult to the majesty of the human intellect. But it is also one of the noblest tributes ever paid to the impeccable soundness of the soul. It is an acknowledgment of that moral constitution of the world in which we are all compelled to believe, if we would not go mad.

It is impossible to mistake the manner in which Jesus authenticates this trust. He also believes that the intuitions of the spirit of man are to be trusted. For Him there is no such confusion in the realm of ethics as there may appear in the world of phenomena. Jesus trusts His own moral judgment. He believes that there is a singleness of eye, a rectitude of vision, granted to all men. But they must claim and exercise it as their own.

This is what makes His presence so important amongst men in our age. He is the One Person who

can recall us from the disorder of our moral judgments to the perception of the simple facts of the moral life. Of the existence of such disorder no proof is needed. A modern dramatist like Mr. Galsworthy provides us with excellent examples of the confusion in which most of our best men are living. The slice he gives us from life leaves us with the conviction that we are confronted by irreconcilable antinomies. It would seem that life is so radically unjust that nothing short of a universal upheaval can make it endurable to conscientious men. There is no clear statement, not even the suggestion of an inference, which could serve as guide for a man in some moral quandary.

This is, indeed, the element out of which, according to Hegel, the tragedies of life are made. When two rights conflict we have the stuff for tragic issues. And who would deny that life does present us with many of these moral antagonisms which appear to defy our efforts to harmonise them? Antigone, confronted by the dilemma of being disobedient to the law or faithless to her love for her brother, is a pathetic symbol of these; Cordelia, the unhappy victim of the folly of her father and the wickedness of her sisters, may still move us to tears. And poor Tess, crushed like a flower by brutal hands, is a type of the tragic element in the life of men.

But it is untrue that these are representative of the normal conditions of life. In the majority of our human experiences there is a conflict between a perceptible right and a discernible wrong. And even in the tremendous strife which serves as the material for the dramatist, there is usually a manifest difference in the weight and importance of the two conflicting rights. Here is where we find the value of an ethical authority. We do not ask for a judgment on the particular case. That would only mystify still more our poor intellects with a finely

woven web of casuistry. We need some one who will boldly declare our duty to obey the mandate of the greater right. Commanding us to act in scorn of consequence, his words will be in harmony with what our own soul declares to be an unchangeable righteousness.

To know that there has been One who did so act, who guided His life by the belief that He knew of Himself what was right, will not imply the diminution of our responsibility. The belief that His authority is still supreme for us, will not mean that we are delivered from the necessity of taking thought. But it will mean that our waning confidence in the victory of righteousness may be rejuvenated. It will strengthen us in our effort to bring life into accord with the Master's precepts.

A great part of the modern indictment against Jesus is found in the plays of Ibsen. The leading idea of the Norwegian dramatist is that at any cost the individual must develop that which is within him. This must be done, although in the process it may be necessary to destroy all those cherished relationships amidst which the individual is born and lives. This it is that makes his plays part of the modern indictment of the world against Jesus. It is true that the woman may be married, that she has therefore presumably some kind of duty to her husband and children. But when this is suggested, the answer is given that the only duty she recognises is that she owes to herself. She must express at any cost her inner nature.

Some things appear to be forgotten by these teachers. For any human being to carry out this principle would begin by making the nursery intolerable to the hireling who labours there. Such a theory acted on throughout life would be disastrous. There are unfortunates who never meet with the chastisement which is the proper reward for the assertion of their own right to be unpleasant. Given full liberty, these would break up any

social order into a mass of mutually antipathetic persons. Men would be united only by the fear they entertain of even more ruthless foes.

For the last half-century men have been filling Europe with their gibings at religion. Had they ever taken the trouble to work out their own theories, they must have seen that their outcome would be a world modelled after Kilkenny and its cats. The sweet picture of the swine nuzzling each other from the trough and gorging themselves in haste lest some other member of the tribe might get a portion, would then have been a lifelike portrait of our human relationships.

Every meal would culminate in a free fight for the remainder. The excitement of a saleroom, in which women once more revert to primitive methods and fight for their purchases, would be characteristic of all meeting-places of this loving family. The only way to make life tolerable would be to adopt the methods of Old Kentucky, and ride or walk prepared to shoot on sight.

This is not the first time that this gospel has been preached to the world. It was probably heard in primitive woods. There our arboreal ancestors discussed, with the accompaniment of such weapons as were handy, the possession of a coco-nut. Each of them would be sure that the development of his own nature, the expression of his own individuality, demanded that the coco-nut should be surrendered to him by his rival. But for good or ill we have changed that, at least in form. The world has recognised that if this doctrine of crude individualism is carried to its logical issue, there can be no such thing as civilisation. From it can come no hope of movement towards a harmonious or ordered human relationship.

Ibsen's gospel of free expression of oneself, at any cost, can only be carried out in a world in which each one lives alone. The maintenance of all our rights, the assertion of our individual likings and dislikings under all

conditions, must drive us to the life of Timon by the sea-shore. These haters of monasticism regard the anchorite as the putrid stain in a lovely world. But the logic of their principles would compel them to follow in the footsteps of monk and hermit, and flee the society of their fellows.

Look at the substitutes offered for the authority of Jesus. Can we fail to be impressed by the poverty of resource displayed by those who are dissatisfied with the ethical principles of Christianity? They are at least as contradictory as Christian theologians. And they have not the excuse of the latter, that there is an element of agreement in their foundation thinking. Carneades could appear one day in Rome and lecture there on natural justice; but the day following he could deny its existence. That is how sophistry plays with the realities of the moral world and transforms them into vapour. And it is doing its corrosive work at the present time.

Compelled to turn away from Christianity, we are invited by others to contemplate the Gothic ideal of gentlemanly conduct. We are to discover in that vague region an efficient substitute for the principles of Jesus.

It might have occurred to the good men who suggest these new departures to old fields, that there is another side to their picture. If the historians have not been guilty of even grosser libelling than usual, the Gothic ideal was lamentably imperfect. It was not so charming to those who were subjected to its influence as it appears when looked at through the mists of time. It implied a calm acceptance of two worlds. The one was inhabited by people who were *born*. In the other dwelt those who were merely produced in the ordinary way of human generation. True, the well-born had the delight of battle with their peers. But the odorous multitude was effectively restrained from contaminating the field of joyous conflict by their presence. This may have been pleasant

enough to the men who were members of that elect society. It can hardly be recommended to an age which has fixed its mind on an approximation towards social equality.

That the Gothic ideal has often lived under the ægis of Christianity, there need be no attempt to deny. But the authority of Jesus has always been in the direction of restraining those outbursts of fratricidal fury which are the genuine production of the Gothic spirit. We may hark back to the fashion of Sigurd. Tostig may embody the highest that we can see in conduct. But let us at least understand that we are sacrificing something of value for a thing of little worth.

George Eliot devoted her genius to showing the men of her generation that morality could not well be tampered with. She believed that ties, whether inherited or voluntarily accepted, are not to be repudiated because they have ceased to be pleasant. For with them there must go the virtue of society and the character of the individual. That stern lesson needs again to be enforced. A generation may forget that life can never be constructed entirely in terms of the individual. Many even now are in revolt against the radical principles of all society. Shall we counsel them to cultivate a habit of gentlemanly conduct, whether you call it Gothic or Oriental? We might as well attempt to bind an elephant with a bulrush. Gentlemanly conduct may indeed be assumed for a time. A man may put on a mask to hide his ugliness. But the only conduct which will stand the stress of the world's pulling is that which has its foundations in the heart, which springs from the affection of one who sees men anew in Christ Jesus.

It is written by the Rabbis that no man may make the bones of his father and mother into spoons. It is good counsel, not unworthy of being pondered by those who are prepared to invent a fresh ethical system between

the bacon and the marmalade of a morning meal. Yet this is exactly what we are trying to do in our generation, with the assistance of our skilled tutors and writers of talent. What is the belief lying behind many of our rebellions against the accepted views of human conduct? It is the conviction that the generations before us were radically wrong, that they were incapable of legislating for either cats or infants. Whether that assumption is justified by the facts has yet to be proved. The determination that nothing shall stop the Vandal in his course of destruction amongst the mind's masterpieces must presumably be allowed to have its way. There have been other ages which have probably felt the same about their ancestors. Yet they have been obliged to admit at last that in the matter of being born, of living, and of dying, there was not much that they could teach the people who had gone before them. Some of these despised predecessors would at least have denied that assertion of Guerrazzi's, that "force is the mother Eve of all the rights." Something of the ancient nobility of mind, the daring belief in an authority beyond the reach of brutal energy, would have prohibited the thought. It was not for them to exercise their gifts by ignoring the rights of other men. This belief in the supremacy of the bulldog instinct, this faith in the saving power of dynamite and bayonets, is the choicest creation of our new morality. It is accompanied with a scepticism which denies the existence of any code save that which springs from the will of the conqueror. This is the gospel preserved for the latest exponents of the wisdom of the world.

Spencer has told us that the liberation now impending is a liberation from the deceit of human power. But in the new ethics of the century there will be no need to seek for liberation from any such form of deceit. Any endeavour that was ever made by the hypocrite to

render homage to virtue will now be rejected as a superfluous labour. Power undisguised, with its sword ever ready to destroy the rebel, will claim the right to rule the souls of men. Let some misguided person dare to raise his head in remonstrance against the atrocities perpetrated by those who hold the reins of government. There will be waiting for him those sweet and swift measures of retaliation which have been so successful for centuries in Oriental lands. The Bashi-Bazouks of the throne and the Parliament, the Janissaries who are hired to do the will of the rulers, will execute their summary judgment upon the recalcitrant citizen. He will learn at the point of the sword, or under the pleasant influences of the bastinado, that he belongs to the servile class. Let him cultivate his cabbages and be contented with his lot.

Mankind is said to be preparing for a rehabilitation of paganism. The morality of Jesus is to be cast out of the world. That morality has done more than anything else to soften the petrified heart of man. It has mitigated the wolf-like ferocity with which he is endowed by Mother Nature. And this is to be contemptuously rejected as the fanatical dream of a foolish Galilean. Once more the world is to belong to those who have brains like machines, hands like hammers, and hearts of stone.

Long ago the Christian thinker realised that men can be the most formidable of all the beasts of prey. The woman found by Buddha in the desert confessed her preference for the terrors of the wilderness, because there was no oppressor there. That melancholy sarcasm has been re-echoed by all those who have looked upon the cruelties of men towards their kind. It has required courage to dream of a time when the sword should become a sickle, and men should enjoy the fruits of peace. But the Christian saw the beast in man, the

Dionysian element of which the newest philosophy raves and bellows, as an energy to be directed and, when necessary, restrained. It must be rendered obedient to those high impulses which have their home in the soul. Christianity set itself the tremendous task of chaining the fiend in the human breast. It would exorcise by its high Orphic music the wild passions of the human brute. If it did nothing more, it at least made men ashamed of the free manifestation of the instincts of the boar. The hooligan may still bash his wife's skull against the nearest doorpost in his drunken fits. Our refined gentleman of leisure, educated at our public schools, may still find pleasure in seducing his mother's tire-woman. He may even indulge in the imitation of those customs which formed such an ugly blot on the character of some Athenian citizens. But he will at least have the grace to hide these peccadilloes from the world. He will wish that his mother should still think of him as a clean-minded scion of their house. And this has been accomplished by no natural evolution of the moral sense of men. It is not the product of social conditions alone. It bears upon it the mark of the Christian gospel; it has been wrought by the teaching of Jesus. And who will say that it is a small thing to make the human goat a little ashamed of his lechery?

But we are going to improve upon all this. Under the new régime we propose to glory in our shame. We shall say with Strindberg, in his earlier phase, that we deny a God who delights to reign over slaves. Exulting in our freedom, we shall introduce again the revels of the Bacchic horde. In Corybantic dances and Samœdic orgies we shall fling our defiance at every rule of decency. Our fathers strove to restrain the all too human greeds and lusts which pant and hunger for their prey. We propose to set them free.

"It takes a long time," says the saintly Newman, "to

understand things as they are." Great heavens! that is true. It does take a long time to understand that the whole course of Christian culture is to be thrown like offal to the ground. It is difficult to believe that the sobriety and balance to which our best men have attained under the influence of Jesus, is to be regarded as a curse by the citizens of the future commonwealth. Not at once can we appreciate the possibility that the children of a future generation are to be reared in a gospel which teaches that the sins of Sodom are the glories of the human race. If Pan, horned and footed after the manner of a goat, is to be the chief deity of European manhood, it will be hard to convince some of us that humanity is worth redemption.

Happily there need be no permanent fear of such a calamity. There are elements of sanity in mankind. And those will prevent them from throwing aside as worthless the hard-earned trophies of the past. For they must recognise in their cooler moments what the teaching of Jesus has been to the human race during these two millenniums. The Berseem grass is said to be the restorer of the soil of Egypt. It gives back to the earth the natural virtues which have been taken from it. So is it with Christ's doctrine and influence. Under its illumination the life of man has been made progressively purer. The stupidity or gross wickedness of the immoralist has been prevented from poisoning the sweet fields in which most of us still wish to live.

From the confusion engendered by these varying ideas, it is profitable and refreshing to turn to the words of Jesus. For there we find no suggestion of that uncertainty which has characterised the utterances of the philosophers on these questions. We see in His method the one way in which truth concerning human development can ever come into the soul. The belief in the need for a healthy restraint, exercised by the higher

powers of man upon the lower, is always present with him. He does not doubt that men are capable of responding to the searching demands He makes upon them. The philosopher appealed from Philip drunk to Philip sober. Even so Jesus invokes all those elements in our humanity which incite us to rebellion against the thralldom of our passions. That power which Milton ascribes to music, the power to chase doubts from the soul, he belives himself to possess. To the distraught mind of our generation, torn between these assertive claims of many modes of thought and conduct, He comes as the giver of an inward peace. That peace springs from submission to His perfect law.

CHAPTER III

JESUS AND LIBERTY

IT is difficult to deny that the race is making progress. The movement of mankind is unquestionable. We may not all share the blind faith of some of our generation in its immediate objective. But it cannot be seriously maintained that there has been no development.

Yet it is foolish to think of this movement as though it were not only progressive, but regularly and harmoniously progressive. That rhythmic advance, the slow but unceasing trespass of human feet, upon the territories of the unknown, has no corresponding reality. It remains one of the interesting myths which have pleased the human mind at different periods of time.

The true description of the advance of humanity is that of a struggling man. Not without difficulty he puts one limb in front of the other, and then must pause before he can bring his limbs level again. The reaction must be calculated. Long pauses for breathing will be necessary, and during these the faith of men will be tried. Doubts will force their way into the mind about the very existence of this vaunted progress. Then is the time when men need the inspiration of religion. For there is no more effective energy in the service of human advancement than the power of religious belief. Out of this deep well there have been drawn waters that have slaked the thirst of generations.

But the history of genuine experimental religion has

always been confined within limited lines. It has seemed as though only in the intense convictions of men could this fontal source of human improvement take its rise. A fierce determination to maintain the truth of the thing seen, has been the predominant note in the history of religious movements. The broad outlook of the calm philosopher has not been granted to these inhabitants of the cloister. A knowledge of some few truths, each of which has been bitten into the soul as by the acid of the engraver, has served as the spring of their most daring actions.

The immediate result of the beliefs thus created in the heart of man has been a daring faith in the enduring value of the individual. No grander service has been rendered to the cause of human happiness than that of the prophet who first announced his belief in the worth of the individual soul of man. From this proclamation may be dated the commencement of a rational and continued search for freedom. Once liberated in thought from the oppressive influence of the community, able to find within his own soul a true reality, he could not continue in bondage to an external tyranny. The growing force of the young life would assert itself against the majesty of precedent and historic power.

Montesquieu could argue that institutions and laws made men what they are. He found, as any student can find, that many facts seem to support his theory. It remained for Buckle to press the idea to its extreme point of development. He would show men that they were entirely dependent for their spiritual inheritance upon their geographical position. Then the fallacy contained in the theory could be discerned.

Is there to be any precedence given to these mutually interacting powers? Then the authority must be given to those beliefs and convictions which have their origin in the intuitions of the heroic spirit. The prophet has

confronted the world, supported only by his faith in the validity of his spiritual insight. He has impressed truth upon others because it has been impressed first upon his own inner being.

Naturally the rulers of mankind, vigorous champions of the autocracy of might, have not favoured this doctrine when they have been capable of judging opinions. They have not concealed their dislike to the claims advanced by the moralist and the seer on behalf of the common man. Louis Le Grand and Maria Theresa will be at one here. They have no use for such theories. For they know well that their general diffusion can only result in a loosening of those bonds by which their own reign over men's bodies and minds is maintained. Given a genuine belief in the importance of human life, and the peasant may object to the pressure of the courtier's heel.

Tarquin's advice was quite in accord with the ideas common in his station. He suggested that for the preservation of despotism it was necessary to cut down the tallest heads. Bonaparte believes that liberty is the possession of a small and privileged class. It may therefore be abridged with impunity. Even a chattering Madame de Staël becomes to him a veiled menace. For has she not some notions of her own about the importance of liberty to the individual man?

Certainly it can be argued that religion has often been the instrument of tyranny. Men of Machiavellian principles have used it for the limitation of freedom. That story is too well known to need repeating.

But when this fine instinct of the human spirit has been thus abused, it has resulted in the production of the very thing it was intended to destroy. Out of the soul of the oppressed religious community there has sprung the free man. He is fired with the faith his contemporaries have lost. He goes back to the springs they have deserted. He asserts with unconquerable

courage the truth an avaricious tyranny would obliterate from the book of human life.

This is lucidly illustrated by the story of Luther. That rough and sturdy character is born in the bosom of a corrupt Catholicism. He is nursed to maturity by the affection of his spiritual parents. They do not know that he is to prove a destroying angel, who will cleanse the city of its evil. He will compel the citizens to hark back to those realities of the inner spirit by which Catholicism was itself first born.

And what is Luther but a reincarnation, so to speak, of the spirit that breathed in Saul of Tarsus? He, too, is born into a religious organisation, and nurtured at the feet of the reigning spiritual wisdom. He also must sever the bonds that unite him to his parent and pierce the breast that nourished him.

Not as the result of any native genius was this accomplished. The genius was there, of course. But there seems no reason, apart from the awakenings caused by the recognition of new truth, why this man should not have remained one of the pillars of Jewish orthodoxy. No, his speech is the speech of religion, newborn within him. It results from an experience so tempestuous as to destroy, for a time, the equipoise of his manhood. He discovers once more that infinite worth of the individual which forms the starting-point of all deep religious thinking.

Liberty can never without peril forget the debt it owes to religion. From the deepest pieties of the heart it has taken its rise. Trampled upon and scorned by the mighty ones of the earth, it has found sanctuary under the protecting shadow of faith. When men have denied it a house elsewhere, it has found one amongst those who still dared to believe in God and the soul. After all, what other power could maintain alive this tender and sensitive plant? In the realm of ideas the less is nourished by the greater. The child must be

supported by the parent. Sometimes that condition of pupilage must endure for a long period. Seldom is the progeny born, Minerva-like, full armed into this world, prepared to defend itself at once from its foes. For the strong men of the world are not invariably enamoured of this strange flower. They often resent its presence, and would remove it, if they could, with a stroke of the pen. What they have thought and dared to say many others have thought in their hearts, though they have never given it articulate utterance. Perhaps we moderns are more careless about our liberties. It is not likely that we shall produce many men of the spirit of Brutus. Our reverence for power is so profound, that we condone its offences and pardon its insults.

One reason for this coldness of heart in matters pertaining to liberty lies on the surface. It springs from our fear lest the lower orders of society should claim for themselves some of the commodity that once seemed so valuable to us. The fear of an uprising of the great democracy is never far from our thoughts. Terror lest we should lose in the general tempest what we have won for ourselves of security and prosperity may make cowards of us all. We cannot see that our interests and those of the mass of unskilled and impoverished workers are at one. Else we might cease from those habits of mental deference that are so destructive to the free movement of thought amongst us. Yet this social synchronism is the simplest of truths. We do rise or fall together. We cannot elevate the thoughts of those socially below our own level, without being correspondingly enriched in intelligence and refined in sympathy. Let the working masses of society once be touched to finer issues, and the whole commonwealth will be made the stronger and purer. And it is almost superfluous to add that there is no power that can effect this transformation of democracy except religion. For there is no other

agency which, like religion, touches the inner nature of man and effects a change in the centre of the human personality. We may improve manners by a secular education. Beneficent changes may be brought about by the influence of mental enlightenment. But if we wish to effect a radical alteration in any stratum of human nature, we must reorganise and revivify the spiritual forces of religion.

Can we exaggerate the importance of what we owe to those men who through the Christian centuries have been the leaders, called to remodel institutions according to the divine ideal! How shall we estimate what we owe to St Paul, who liberated the nascent energies of the gospel from the perilous swaddling-bands of Judaism!

The spiritual liberty obtained for us by the labours of the devoted Apostle is a fountain at which men have quenched their thirst for nineteen centuries. They will never fail to return to it whenever they see that the ark of their freedom is again in danger.

How much we owe to the monk who became known to history as Hildebrand! His daring antagonism to the monarchical encroachments of his time made him not only one of the princes of the Church, but also one of humanity's most valiant defenders. Or what shall one say of Zwingli and Calvin, those bold assertors of the right and the responsibility of private judgment in matters spiritual? They brought a corrupt and forgetful Church back to the memory of its first principles. They liberated humanity from a bondage which would have choked it to death. Western civilisation has surely been a boon to the world. It has made life more tolerable for the masses of men. Then let it not be forgotten that it would never have been possible but for the spiritual forces which gathered into one the heterogeneous peoples of the Continent. These gave guidance and

purpose to the errant energies concealed in the breast of man.

It is said that the true explanation of the life of Europe during these ages is found in its institutions and laws. Are these the powers by which the thoughts and conduct of men have been moulded? That is a theory to be treated with respect. But every institution is itself the product of some idea. It is founded by the labours of a man or a body of men, themselves animated by some kind of thought. There is one crucial question in all such endeavours to find out the origin of things. Who gave the initial mental impulse, the first seed of the idea that afterwards culminated in the institution of the law? And when we follow out that line of inquiry there can be no disputing the answer given. It is the religion of Jesus that has made the institutions and laws of Europe possible.

It has been coloured by the varying motives of the men through whom it acted. Often it was shaded in dark tones by the inherent greed or envy of the human heart. Yet it has been the main agency by which the best deeds of the past twenty centuries have been accomplished.

But it is not sufficient to have preserved liberty to mankind during these centuries. Burke pointed out long ago, that whenever separation was made between liberty and justice the safety of both was endangered. Let liberty be separated from its congener, its balancing support, and there is no limit to the atrocities of which it may prove guilty. Everything is food to its insatiable maw. Honour and virtue may be to it no more than names. The fairest fruits of human industry and genius may be destroyed by its avenging rapacity. Here then is one of the benefits religion has conferred upon mankind. It has united in the closest bonds these two complementary moral powers. It has been the link which

has made their continued co-operation possible amongst men. Without religion, justice may be no more than a wild expression of the rage and indignation of power. Liberty may become the cry of a fratricidal multitude, vociferating its defiance to God and man. Religion blends the two, and thus provides them with a habitation amongst men. Lord Acton anticipates the time when religious ideas will become again, as in the Middle Ages, the guardians of liberty. That is a belief which many think will be justified by the event. But to ensure it, religious ideas must again be vested in a Person. There must be created a powerful attachment between the individual and his religious leader. Not otherwise can religion become the vital centre of a sober freedom.

This is what makes Jesus so important to men. For it is around Him, through the influence He exerts on the believing spirit of man, that the genius of liberty receives its purest inspiration. Fraulein von Klittenberg, a friend of the Goethes, summarised her own experience in noble words. "As soon as one has absorbed into oneself the pure doctrine and love of Christ, one feels oneself great and free." It is this inward liberation, effected by Jesus, that guarantees civic enfranchisement. It produces an impatience of merely external thraldoms. It justifies a claim for the full development of the self, within the limits prescribed by the rights of others. And this is the heart's-blood of a true and reasonable freedom. Who will say that we can afford to dismiss the Teacher who has taught us that it is truth which makes men free?

It is the opinion of Lecky that Montaigne is the father of religious liberty. It would seem, therefore, that such liberty can only be maintained while we preserve the mood represented by the great sceptic. We shall learn to tolerate the opinions of others when we believe that their opinions are of no value. Belief in the

necessary prevalence of falsehood will give one an impartial scorn for all human judgments. This is a doctrine that we find hard to accept. Surely the assertion of a necessary ignorance is not the only source of charity. Must we take all the lights out of the sky before we can acknowledge that there may be differences in view. It is a bleak prospect that is thus opened before human eyes. The vital hopes of the race are to be proved delusive, before we can learn the art of bearing with each other's different views.

Happily, this is not the true state of the case. Not all the unbelievers have been tolerant. The first Christians were persecuted by a State which claimed to be generous in its treatment of all religions. An Empire that was secular, that made of its own representative and titular head the chief object of worship, laboured to exterminate the disciples of a crucified Jew. It may be said that these persecutions were political, that they were not specifically religious. That is indeed true. But that is precisely what must be urged in mitigation of all these so-called religious persecutions. They all spring from the same poisoned root. They manifest the same essential characteristic. Religion has been but the cloak under which the political wolf has concealed, with devilish ingenuity, his ambitious and far-reaching designs. Was it religion that made Philip of Spain scheme and plot for the subjugation of the Netherlands?

Can we think of that mean and treacherous soul as of one who has been touched by the spirit of the faith he professed? Shall we say that it was religion that made stern Alva marshal his battalions against the simple men of the Low Countries? The ghastly record of crimes done in the name of religion should be credited to the passions which gave them birth. Torquemada may arrange his ghostly processions. He may condemn the unbeliever and the heretic to the flames. And he may

do this in the guise of a religious teacher. But the lie is so manifest that it should not need exposure.

In other matters we exercise our faculty of judgment more fairly. We do not attribute all the possible abuses of a good thing to the thing itself. We do not destroy all the vineyards because some men will get drunk. Nor do we prohibit the growth of tobacco because some boys smoke more than is good for them. It is only when we enter upon the realm of religion that we pronounce these universal condemnations. Then we repudiate a magnificent faith because the unclean brigands of the race have used it for the prosecution of their base designs.

Granted that a miserable Tetzels sells indulgences. Are we therefore to deny the Name of Him whom this mean trader would thus prostitute? Admitted that the Popes of the Renaissance were better judges of feminine beauty and rare vintages than of the efficacy of prayer or the value of the sacraments. Shall we therefore deny the splendour of Him whose Vicar they bootlessly claim. to be? Bad kings have not made monarchy impossible. Stupid presidents have not destroyed the Republican theory. If all prelates were like Laud or Sharp, we might argue that the race had better become extinct. But Berkeley and Taylor would compel us to pause. The iconoclast has his function in this world. Idols need breaking, and the man with the hammer will usually find healthy occupation for his muscles. But he is a dubious benefactor who burns down a cathedral because he is offended by the candles on the altar.

When it is said that liberty has suffered from the tyrannies and cruelties of religion, there is an obvious confusion between two forces which are really quite distinct. The one is that pure flame of love to Christ which has animated men to a passion for freedom. The other is that political ambition and greed of power which has used this as its protective covering.

The curse of the Church has been the presence of the politician. We have known him as Pope. He has entered into the realm of worldly strife, and fought there with the secular arm as though the bludgeon and the sword were the choicest apostolic weapons. He has been with us as Cardinal, using his political genius for the aggrandisement of an earthly potentate, and, like Richelieu, destroying a nobility that he might magnify a monarch. We have known him as king and prelate, priest and presbyter, and it is not wonderful that the world has been nauseated by the tricks and contortions of the ecclesiastical charlatan.

What, then, is the moral of the story? Surely that the time has come when a divorce should be decreed between the religion of Jesus and the political tricksters who have so long used it as a stalking-horse. Religion must be separated from politics, not for the benefit of politics, but for the salvation of religion. It is a peculiarity of the modern situation that the reflective unbeliever is not anxious for this consummation. Voltaire would rather see the State establish religion. "For thus the enterprises of fanatics are repressed, along with their resulting disorders." There are probably many Englishmen who think like him. They do not desire the separation of the Church from the State. For if such a separation took place the spiritual man might again exercise some authority in the community. At present they can muzzle him with a deanery. Let him know that he has nothing to hope and less to fear from anything that the State could do for him, and he might begin to speak again with his ancient power.

Nor is this peril which is threatening the existence of religion confined to an Establishment. The members of the Free Churches are not less in danger from the same cause. Unless their leaders are careful the men who draw their descent from Baxter and Goodwin may

become the tools of a Parliamentary caucus. The only attitude for the disciple of Christ is that of the calmly critical person who trusts no Party, but uses his influence to force either Party to approximate towards the path of righteous action. Thus the religious man remains independent. He is not a nonentity, to be cajoled by the silly sophistries of electioneering agents. He takes political parties as they exist. He knows that you can buy any of them with votes. And he ceaselessly urges the claims of the disinherited and outcast, in the name of his Lord.

Religion has helped to maintain alive the spirit of liberty in the past. It will soon be the one agent in the world which still maintains a belief in the worth of freedom.

In no other way can we liberate religion from the tyranny of those who would use it for ignoble ends. Then we shall once more see the authority of Jesus moving men to a passionate love of noble freedom. The race of Milton and Vane, men who loved liberty like a bride, will be revived in our midst. Wordsworth's high music, as he thinks of the death of Toussaint l'Ouverture, will again become fit speech for Englishmen. The seven pillars of Chillon's dungeons will speak to us as they spoke to the wild soul of Byron. Liberty will be more than the product of a calculating expediency. It will cease to be the grant of timid monarchs to outraged citizens. It will be the birthright of those who have found a spiritual freedom. They will know an inner emancipation which assures the breaking of shackles from every limb. Let us make Jesus accessible again to men, delivered from the ceremonies of ecclesiastical forms. Then religion will be what it has ever been in its palmy days, the awakening bugle to the sleeping soldiers of humanity.

CHAPTER IV

JESUS AS SOCIAL ARBITER

BEFORE we undertake the reformation of the world we must understand something of the limits of the practicable. No result of enduring worth can come from schemes never submitted to the tests of logic and life. The social order of the future must be founded on principles that have proved themselves universally true. It is vain to expect that the world can be rebuilt in accordance with ideas which have shown themselves delusive whenever men have attempted to realise them.

What, then, is the first principle of all human progress? Perhaps we may find it by showing where some of those once accepted have failed of their purpose. Condorcet proclaimed his theory of the perfectibility of man. He held before us the dream of a time when the wickedness of the strong shall have ceased to create and foment the misery of the weak. Yet the tragic story of the author's life and death, the memory of that internecine warfare which cost him his life, is a cruel comment on that noble hope.

Put by the side of that the harsh doctrine of the orthodox economists. Their teaching informs us that man never works until he is hungry. He is prompted in all things by enlightened self-interest. The only motive which has any influence over the soul of man is that of gain. Can we accept as the last word of science and of ethics the doctrine that man is only moved by a porcine

hunger? Human nature rebels against the degrading slander, and in rebelling proves it false. All our expectations of any amelioration of the lot of man have their root in the belief that he is capable of sacrifice. There is a limit to the power of the selfish motive. Foolish, indeed, he is who thinks that this motive will cease to operate. Yet he is not so blind to the facts of experience as he who thinks that men will ignore enduring æsthetic and spiritual influences.

We know that there are occasions when the selfish affections cease to exert authority over us. Then we catch the gleam of those purer purposes whose shimmering beauty thrills the soul.

Let us confess the force of these spiritual energies. They will not permit us to sink to the abysses of animalism. What may we hope to accomplish when they exert their will, unimpeded, over the destiny of man?

Much may be done. He would be a daring speculator who would say of the emancipated intelligence that there is a limit to its soaring flight. Yet there are some correctives to the aspiring genius of humanity. And the recognition to these can only prove salutary to those who hope for a more glorious day.

First amongst these is the bitter truth that man is mortal. All our legislation, all our endeavours for the improvement of the species, may come to nought unless we accept as the foundation of all our action the truth that life is short.

We may preach about the future happiness of mankind in some remote era of the world's history. But of what value is the promise of a dubious felicity for future generations, to men who feel that their own capacities for pleasure are hourly diminishing? It is true that the opportunities offered to mankind for enjoying the passing days are increasing. But still the hours are flying and the end will come.

Yet more necessary is it that we should understand that men will not be satisfied for long. They are not content with any schemes by which physical sensations are multiplied. You cannot permanently please them by making the hours dance yet more swiftly away. It is true that man is a chronically dissatisfied creature. Heap up pleasures, and they may satisfy his ravenous appetite for a time. But he cannot rest in any Vale of Tempe, however fair and attractive it may be. The genius of his own nature leads him to rebel against the laws he has laboured to establish. The demon within will induce him to destroy the temple he has built at such fearful cost.

It has been pointed out that Calvin saw social discipline to be more necessary than metaphysical correctness. That judgment of the social reformer of his time may not do justice to the searching intellect of the man. But it recognises the importance he attached to the restraining and moralising effects of the Christian religion. That side of religious life has not received in recent times all the attention it deserves. Mankind has developed a passion for discovering the Absolute. There has been evinced a determination to make the meaning of the World intelligible. This has distracted our attention from the value of the Christian religion as an agent in the construction of a stable and ethical social order. The denial of most of the sanctions and prohibitions of religion has let loose the flood of human passions. It may be true that another inroad of the barbarians is as impossible as Gibbon maintained. Yet the anarchic passions of mankind may once more endanger the whole fabric of society.

It is a fair question to put to every reformer of society, Why are you so hopeless of mankind when it is Christian, and so confident of its advancement when it has ceased to respect the gospel? After all, the human race can never go beyond its own ideals. Have we robbed those

ideals of their inspirational force? Have we analysed them into their elements of common clay? Then how absurd it is to suppose that men will continue to labour for their furtherance!

It has been alleged that democracy, like aristocracy or monarchy, sacrifices everything to sustain itself. If this could be proved, then the main argument for the defence of democracy would be removed. For a democracy which is to live, which hopes to maintain a footing in such a world as ours, can only do so by proving that it tends to the enrichment of life. Must the advent of democracy lead to the impoverishment of the human spirit? Is it certain that the sentiments which have their home in the human breast will be compelled to flee before its advance? Answer these questions in the affirmative and nothing can save democracy from ultimate failure. It will join the multitude of theories which refuse to reckon with human nature and history.

This makes the relation of Christianity to democracy so important to mankind. It is not only a prime consideration to the Christian believer. It is of equal gravity in the eyes of the man who hopes for the final enfranchisement of the race. Christianity has kept before the world an ideal city. That city has always captivated the imagination as a thing of beauty and joy. Its fascination has not failed even when its realisation has seemed least feasible. No failure of political systems has been able to quench the passionate faith of Christ's followers. They have continued to believe in the triumph of righteousness. They have despised the wickedness entrenched in the institutions of mankind. Is this dream of the Christian to be rejected by men? To what, then, should they turn as a salve for their bruised souls? Where can they discover a new hope to take the place of the old?

For generations, men have accepted the doctrine formulated to her son by the Mother of the Abbé de

Chersy, "My son, there is but one noblesse, that of the sword." During many ages that theory was accepted and acted upon in nearly every grade of society. But during that time Christianity maintained a select few who knew that there was another order. These men believed in a noblesse created, not at the point of the sword, but by a fraternal affection. Their aristocracy was born and nourished in the soul of the pious believer. It may be that there lies before the world an age in which the doctrine of the high-born dame may again hold sway. Men may once more forget the precepts of the Nazarene. They may again avow the cult of strife and praise the glory of hatred. But does any man imagine that such a change of sentiment will be a gain to the world? Can any enlightened mind be so blind to the facts of history? At least this confession must be made. Religion has maintained throughout the darkest ages of the past the belief that there is another and a better way.

Furthermore, this must be acknowledged. There is not, in any of the purely socialistic theories, a body of truth which will serve as an explanation of the World. Not one of them will entirely remove the pressure of life's problems. It is generally admitted now, even by those most enamoured of the Marxian theory, that it fails to recognise the importance of high intelligence in the production of wealth. There is not a sufficient degree of weight given to those unusual characters who have made the paths which lead to the treasure-houses of the world. Some of these men have given to the world inventions which have changed the life of millions. They must play a more important part in the industrial life of a nation than those who can only be entrusted with the management of a machine invented by genius. These unusual characters must at any price be retained for the industrial community. Their work must be

rewarded, or, at least, the prospect of reward must be held out to them. Otherwise the river of human intelligence, which has fertilised the industrial life of mankind for generations, will run dry.

And it must also be remembered that the reward cannot be decided by those for whom the work is done. It must be settled by the persons who have done what the mass of men are not capable of doing. No force from without can compel them to work. Of their own will they must accept the terms on which their labour is to be put into the common stock. We may promise to reward them by erecting statues to their memory when they are dead. We may offer them decorations while they are living. But it is still true that we may take a horse to the water but cannot compel him to drink. And we are obliged to await the decision of these men before we can guarantee that their stock of inventive genius will still be at command. It may be regrettable that these elect children of the race should only be open to the inducement of wealth, with its concomitants of power and prestige. But what if they will only work on condition that these guerdons are offered? Then it is useless for us to complain that they are not moved by higher and purer motives. On this rock any system of economics which makes equality of reward a part of its theory is bound to be wrecked.

Nor is it to be denied that where the emphasis is placed unduly on the State, another peril confronts the reformer. Where many things are done for the individual by the community, some of the most valuable qualities of human character may be allowed to run to seed. There is, at least, the possibility that a man may lose some of that initiative, that ability to adapt himself to new conditions, which is the hall-mark of the truly capable. This danger may easily be exaggerated. There is no reason to fear its immediate pressure on

the self-reliant nature produced by our English system of life. But that it is a real danger all thoughtful students of history would be prepared to admit.

On the other hand, it is impossible to construct a complete theory of life out of materialistic individualism. If that principle is pressed home to its logical conclusion, it must end in egoistic anarchy.

In this respect the idealists and the socialists are at one. They rightly agree in their indictment of a purely individualistic theory of economics or of life. For they remind us that life is always found existent in relations. It depends upon a correspondence between the life force and its external conditions. The smallest form of vitality cannot exist in a vacuum. There are conditions of air, light, or heat on which the existence of life is contingent. So is it in the life of the human being. There are always circumstances which limit his independence. He cannot thrive unless the physical wants are met. There can be no development of the inner life, no growth of the mind, unless circumstances are favourable to its culture. These conditions may operate by direct assistance. Or they may do their work indirectly, by stirring into movement, through their opposition, the latent mental forces stored in the vital germ. But the picture of an entirely individualistic person is impossible. It is as far from reality as the idea of a human being, diffused through the personal life of millions of other human creatures, disseminated through space like a vapour, and without any local habitation, would be remote from the facts of our common experience.

The recognition of these antinomies has in recent times driven men to accept some kind of middle path. They have come to understand that neither of these two systems is satisfactory. In neither can there be found an explanation of life, or a scheme of the social order entirely without reproach.

The element of finality has been removed from them. Their promoters are not unwilling to admit that arguments on the other side ought to receive some consideration. This may be unsatisfactory to those who will be content with nothing short of an entire and completely closed system of the world. It will annoy those who would reduce everything to a chess-board uniformity. But to those who are conscious of the intricacy of the world, and the difficulty of finding a formula to cover every case, it is not unwelcome. For the upshot of it is that we must alter some of our judgments. Some measure of the socialistic element must come into our communal life. Not otherwise can we be delivered from those social deformities which at present cause such pain to compassionate hearts.

It tells us also that our wild dreams of making everything communal property must be dismissed. The rationalising of human emotions, the regulating of the most intimate relations of life by an officious authority, would imply an intolerable restraint. Such vain illusions are sure to be dissipated when they touch the realities of human experience. Earnest gentlemen tell us that they are going to change the union of souls which the Christian Church has sanctified. They will make of it an arrangement which differs little from that made by the producer of exhibition cattle. We may be certain that the instincts of humanity will save us from that profanation of human rights. The frantic formalist will not be permitted to destroy the fatherhood of man, that the fatherhood of the State may take its place. We find it difficult to believe that the growing tree of humanity will prove so fruitless at the last. Its crowning achievement will not be cast down as though it were a house built by a laughing child on everchanging sands.

How shall we harmonise the rightful claims of the individual with the legitimate claims of the State? This

is the task of the Christian Church in the immediate future. In some respects the authority of the State has been exaggerated. That claim to enforce religious opinions upon a citizen, so stoutly maintained by Laud and his associates, has been proved invalid in the courts of logic. It has been denied by the common sense of man. Most of these arrangements were made by men sensitive to the claim of the community upon the respect of the individual. They had little understanding of the individual's right to the direction of his own life. That attitude of mind is not likely to become popular again in civilised society. It may still have its supporters in countries where the mass of the population is steeped in ignorance. It will be defended where the ruling classes live in dread of the horrible results which follow from the opening of schools for the people. Russia may still think that the only important matter for the statesman is to discover what the educated minority think on any subject. China may continue to believe that the wishes of her peasantry are negligible, while the opinion of the literati is final. But in the lands which have been touched by the spirit of European culture this is not likely to happen again. For the *ordinary person* has been born. And he is claiming that in all matters belonging to the State, in so far as they affect his personal conduct, his judgment shall be listened to. It is quite improbable, therefore, that he will ever be driven back to his den of darkness. For no beautiful theory will he sacrifice the liberty he has won at such a price. He will not permit the community to exercise tyranny over him again in the interests of a class or a faction. The right of the average man to be heard, his claim to be considered, is one of the most precious fruits of our modern culture. This right is the strongest safeguard we possess against the encroachments of those in high places. They may not transform free men into

chattels, that a particular theory may be proved to be true.

Again, we must ask, What is the relation between the Christian doctrine and the principle of competition? Let it be recognised that competition is not a devilish invention of the human mind, but that it actually exists as part of the scheme of nature. There may be some help in the suggestion of mutual aid which Kropotkin has emphasised. It is said to be discernible in the processes by which the lower creatures maintain themselves. But it is not likely that any study of that form of life will greatly help us. We can hardly escape from the plain fact that in the world of physical nature the competitive principle is immensely powerful.

And it is useless for the Christian to suggest that this competition is necessarily the synonym of death. This has been too frequently done in the epigrams of brilliant writers. For the obvious truth of the matter is that this energy of struggle is an instrument of life. It is often the chief means whereby the wealth of the world can be exploited for the benefit of mankind. The great discoveries which have brought new forms of industry into being, have mostly been made under the stimulus of some form of the competitive principle. That principle may have been operative in its coarser or its finer phases. It may have been merely a struggle between men for the crude wealth resulting from the discovery. This is the case where gold miners are seeking for the location of a rich vein. Or it may have been the dignified conflict between two savants for priority in the field of investigation. But whether it be Titus Salt or Alfred Wallace, the presence of the competitive instinct is easily discerned.

Indeed, it would simplify our thinking, if we candidly admitted that the principle of honourable striving is an element in the paternal government of the world. It is only by such competing between the aspirants for

excellence that the goal of a relative perfection can ever be reached. There can be no truly effective life in which this principle does not show itself in some form. How then shall we correlate it with the Christian teachings of fraternal regard and collective well-being?

This can only be achieved by first acknowledging that the competitive principle is present. Then we must construe its activities in higher terms than those to which we are accustomed. We perceive the sheer strife of tiger and panther hunting for food. Fabre has described that instinct of rapacity which leads the spider to devour one of its own kind if found within its web. There is a competition which would make earth and its populations into a gigantic raft, on which living creatures float between sea and sky fighting for possession of a limited quantity of supplies. The world thus becomes an appalling Medusa wreck. This must be replaced by a nobler interpretation of the competitive idea. We must cease to consider the ant, to take as our example the activities of the lower forms of life, either in aid or in strife. Disregarding these we must keep before men the idea of a system of mutual help which will utilise the force of the competitive principle. Out of this will be produced a higher form of social living. Then the consideration needed by the weak will be given to them. The hideous cruelties which result from a free development of the Nietzschean doctrine will be precluded from showing themselves. The foundations of any Christian community must in the future tend towards the ideas of mercy and justice. These formed the chief theme of Jesus whenever He outlined the kingdom of the future. Those elements of life are not found in the world of the lower created forms. The insect or the mammalia have no knowledge of their existence, and make no effort to bring them into being. The insurgence of man against the brutalities of the natural world is one of the salient

facts of our time. We have come to see that there can be no improvement of the order of communal life until we have subjugated the instincts of our animal being to the higher purposes of the soul. Men find themselves confronted by the need for this new and ideal kingdom. And they must seek in the recorded words of Jesus for that which will maintain the flame of their idealism in the midst of a murky world.

In what manner then shall we try to bring the condition of society into conformity with the Christian ideal?

Of necessity we must dismiss the notion that Christianity is bound up with any particular political theory. The democracy of the gospel is not incompatible with any of the forms of government recognised as useful in the history of the world.

An amazing delusion has gripped the modern mind. It is believed that by the mere substitution of one form of government for another we may guarantee felicity for all. By this shifting of the cards we attain to what through generations the disciples of Jesus have worked for. Yet all these systems, viewed simply as systems, have failed. Separated from the ethical forces which give them value, they are helpless. This is dawning now upon the minds of many. Macaulay's blind faith in the saving efficacy of Whiggism is discerned to be baseless. The confidence which his contemporary of Chelsea entertained in the method of redemption through switch and spur is equally vain. Neither Charles Fox nor Frederick of Prussia can save us. For the Christian all just means are possible for the attainment of the ideal. That ideal is the extension of the largest measure of freedom compatible with the freedom of others and the effective performance of social functions. A pure democracy may repeat the experiment of the Athenians. It may sacrifice to the theatre the funds required for national defence.

This is as hostile to the politics of the gospel as the tyranny of a maniacal Ivan, whose blood heats to boiling-point when his courtiers speak of liberty.

Another consideration is equally necessary. We must recognise industry as a condition of the world's life, never likely to cease from being. We may dismiss the dreams of a time when the population of the world shall be competent to enjoy unlimited idleness. There can never be an age when men will have nothing to do but receive the product of mechanical contrivances. Those chimeras of the brain had better be dismissed for ever. The elimination or satisfaction of old wants only leads to the creation of new ones. The manufacturer who has retired from business must learn to ride or shoot or golf. Only in this way can he save himself from the intolerable boredom he never knew in the days when he was making his fortune. Our aristocracy toil like navvies to amuse themselves. In the climbing of mountains, the shooting of partridges or hippopotami, or the sailing of yachts over the world's seas, they consume energy which would add materially to the tangible wealth of mankind if expended in productive effort. For, indeed, man is a creature of an insatiable hunger. There is no limit to the demands he may make upon life.

Nor ought we to cheat ourselves with the fanciful creation of Rousseau's imagination. The return of an era in which the untutored savage ate of the fruits of the earth and was satisfied, can never prove acceptable to the majority of mankind. There may be a legitimate rejection of some of the limitations imposed upon the individual by the social order. His withdrawal to a city made after a preconceived plan may be commendable under present conditions. It is a protest against those grotesque samples of ugliness with which most of our modern towns are blessed. But the true reformer will never be the man who retires from the society of his

fellow-men. We are creatures who live in herds. The instinct of the family is in our blood. It is yet true that there must be in him something of the beast or the god, who is content to live alone. Society will be transformed, if at all, by those who are content to form part of the social order. They will have the courage to endure some of its discomforts while seeking for improvement of communal conditions.

Increasingly evident is it, also, that the Christian thinker must assert the claim of the labourer to the first charge upon industry. The notion of man as a mere profit-making machine is a horrible outrage on humanity. Such a notion could only arise in a civilisation hardly touched by the Christian spirit. It must be finally banished from the industrial life of a nation claiming to have the slightest connection with the teachings of Jesus.

This will imply that we shall look upon Nature, that is, upon the array of physical forces by which men are surrounded, as being frequently hostile to the moral principle. Men will realise increasingly that they must not yield blindly to the impulse to slay or to use, according to their whim of the moment. The activities of body and mind must be directed by the enlightened conscience.

It will always be difficult to guarantee to the inefficient workman the full reward of his labour. The pressure of competition will ever tend to reduce wages below a level commendable to an enlightened mind. The chief guarantee for high wages must be either the rapidity of the workman or the excellence of the work done. Let this be secured for the good workman. How, then, shall we protect the indifferent worker from the results of his own relative incompetence? This can only be done by a determined effort on the part of the community. It must be agreed that every human being is entitled to the provision of a fixed quantity of food,

clothing, and shelter, or its equivalent in money. And a necessary inference from this is the enforcement of the duty of labour upon all sane and qualified persons.

No Christian can dispute the maxim that in a civilised land the death of a man by unsought starvation is a crime. Of that crime every member of the community is proportionately guilty. Nor can any philanthropist or reformer deny the implication that, if any person claims this right to food, he must also acknowledge the obligation of work. Whether it will be possible to find work which will do full justice to the unused abilities of these men, it is difficult to say. Whether their tastes can be accommodated, and to what extent they are to be considered, are questions which will require sympathetic study. But the truth that every man who will work shall have a right to the elements of life, as against the society into which he is born, is becoming established in the minds of all good men.

Let it be understood that this is a theory which is bound up with the Christian doctrine of life. But it is by no means an integral portion of a conception of life which denies the principles of Jesus. If we are to live by the light of pure naturalism, this doctrine may be disregarded. If we are to believe that the mind is in no respect different from, its precepts no more authoritative than, the instincts and passions of the body, no logic can prove that the inefficient workman has the right to live. Accept a system of thought which rejects the eternal issues implicated in the spiritual life of man ; then there is no argument which can be interposed as a defence between the rapacity of the strong and the helplessness of the weak. Deny the existence of an eternal righteousness, of which our moral conceptions are imperfect transcripts ; then there is no compulsion to recognise any right of your fellow-creature, save those which he can enforce by superior might.

The manufacturer may deprive himself permanently of a prospective profit in order to spare the body of his workmen. He may do this to save him for future toil ; or he may do it as the result of a temporary impulse of generosity. Do you declare it to be the product of a settled theory of life ? Then such a man has accepted an exposition of existence which prepares him to acknowledge Jesus as his Lord.

We shall probably see, or our descendants will see, illustrations of this distinction. The authority of Christian sentiment may become sufficiently powerful to enforce this principle upon the collective body. Then there will be a vigorous revolt of those who have nominally bowed to the rule of Jesus. For they will see that the acceptance of such an interpretation of life demands a considerable sacrifice. It means the surrender of what they have regarded as exclusively their own. These need not be bad men. They will probably be those who have acknowledged the beauty of the gospel precepts, without realising their inevitable sequences.

But behind these ranks there will be the Hedonists of the world, the Greeks of the modern age. To them all this will be mere foolishness. They will fight tooth and nail to preserve their rights against the advancing claims of the Christian democratic spirit. The religious men of the future will be guilty of a fatal mistake if they imagine that these people will cheerfully bow to the Christian law. This conflict, the real Armageddon of the future, will be sterner than any hitherto known. For the antagonists will be conscious of what they are fighting against. This cannot be said of the wars of former centuries. Then one ignorant mass was hurled against another, without explanation on either side. But in these days of the telegraph and the press there will be a recognition of the radical nature of the conflict, and the immensity of the interests at stake. There will be a

deliberate and concerted effort to prevent the development of the Christian spirit in social life. The antipathy to the Christian theory of life will cease to be hidden. It will be published abroad as offering a standard around which the disaffected and the rebellious may gather.

Many societies in the past have organised one or two of the qualities desirable in the life of the people. They have given prominence to the idea of liberty. The freedom of the individual has been put in the front rank. They have resented any infringement of personal liberty as an insult to the whole society. But these communities have usually been compelled to subordinate other tribes or to maintain some form of slavery. In no other way could the painful work of the society be efficiently done. Sometimes it has been accomplished by the practical enslavement of women. But invariably the pride of free citizenship has carried with it the enforcement of authority over some of the less capable populations around them.

Has equality been the prevailing cult, that equality of which Napoleon III. said the French nation were so fond? Then there has been an effort to enforce their ideals upon other people. There has grown up a hatred of those who prefer other forms of social order. And this has stained the propagandists of the equalitarian movement with as many crimes as may be attributed to the Neros or Caligulas of the world.

It remains for a religious society to make *fraternity* the base of a social system. Thus men may actualise the ideals of the saints. This society can only come into existence with the assistance of the Christian forces of the world.

For how do we know that the fraternity of man is not a phantom of the mind? Only by that confirmation of the mind's judgment by a faith born of Christian experience? It is easy to see that there will be difficulty in inducing the masses of men to accept the basal idea

of fraternity. Look at the attitude adopted by the majority of explorers in the lands newly opened to the world. It is not merely that they are careless of the idea of fraternity. It is rather that they are hostile to it. To them it is an absurdity to be banished before anything good can be accomplished for the coloured races of mankind. They hold the notion up to scorn. They seek for those illustrations, so numerous and handy in every situation of life, which will make the idea appear ludicrous to the eyes of their compatriots.

And what of the teaching of the sciences which deal with this matter? We cannot appeal to them for support of the apostolic doctrine that God is no respecter of persons. They will not guarantee to us that men are even the descendants of one family. There is no certitude about the origin of man to be found in the textbooks of the modern scientist. All that he can tell us is that we have all descended through the same processes. We have succeeded in reaching different stages along the line of progress, and there may be still further developments lying before us in the future.

The distinctions in endowment as between races or individuals are vast and complex. It is easy to deny any elemental relation between them. Rousseau could assure us that the points of similarity between men of the most diverse aspect were greater and more numerous than the points in which they differed. But that is not sufficient groundwork on which to fashion a theory of such importance as the brotherhood of man.

The idea of fraternity will never be made productive until the rule of Jesus is acknowledged in social and international life. Nothing less than faith in Him can enable men to control the instincts of exclusion and antipathy. There will continue to be conflicts of all kinds. The hatreds of the various races will be as smouldering embers. They will frequently threaten to

burst into flame. They cannot be quenched until the ethics of the gospel are made the predominant factor in the world's life.

So long as the world is practically non-Christian, Renan's words will remain true. The State can only organise egoism. The finer emotions of the soul will remain outside the cognisance of a community acting through its officials. The interpretation of life will always be in terms of self-interest. The hand of the State will only be exerted to separate the combatants. It will merely prevent the mighty from annihilating the feeble and the poor. But once let the element of a Faith in Jesus be accepted. Make this the ground of our collective conduct. Then the attitude towards each other of members of the human family would gradually suffer a vital change.

Then it would be admitted that a new standard of judgment was in being. In the realm of physical nature the helpless man has no claims. But in the domain of human nature, that sphere in which the soul is the dominant agent, the impotent man has the strongest of all claims. For he demands recognition from our love. His rights may be non-existent in any court of natural equity. But in that court to which the religious man makes his final appeal it would be seen that his rights were incalculable. They are rights to whatever the strong and healthy can do for the man who has fallen by the wayside.

How is this consummation to be brought about? How shall we change the world into a community acknowledging the claim of every man as a brother? It must be accomplished by the explicit confession that the Church exists for this purpose. The believers in Christ must, throughout the world, give greater prominence to this sentiment of affection. The task of rousing the conscience will remain peculiarly that of the preacher. The

charities of the community will need to be administered with a wisdom not always present in that form of effort. But chiefly the Church must aid and encourage the collective body in all labours towards social amelioration. The aim of the Church must be to hallow every effort to enrich the life of the people.

Once let the Church understand this her high function and there will no longer be any question of her decadence. She will become once more the crown and glory of the world's life. The people will again find themselves at home beneath her banners. It is said that Whistler, after having shown his friend the picture he had himself sent to the Academy, was asked, "Where are the others?" The answer given was, "There are no others, we are through." The amusing vanity of the artist was never better illustrated. He spoke half in earnest, half in jest, of himself and his work. But we say with all seriousness of the claims made for Jesus as the social arbiter of the world, There are no others. If we are to seek for some influence which will mitigate the strife of men, we must enrol ourselves again under His banner. Would we find some theory of life to lift us above the sordid selfishness of the market? We must find it in Him. Do we seek some judgment which will define our relation towards those whom we serve or to those who serve us? We must come at last to the acceptance of His rule. Build the city of Joy where men may dwell together under their own vine and fig tree. You must copy from the outline He has projected before the imagination of the world. In Him alone we find the sceptred rule which can compel the industrial situation to render fealty to God's righteousness.

CHAPTER V

JESUS AND THE PLACE OF WOMAN

WE are said to be suffering from an atrophy of the moral faculty. In every direction there is a tendency to break through lines drawn round the passions by the foresight and will of our ancestors. The modern attitude to marriage illustrates this. Men and women alike are labouring to destroy this fortress of human virtue. This rebellion has taken its rise amongst the privileged and wealthy classes. There is amongst these classes a growing dislike to the obligations of Christian marriage. The idea that the vow shall be binding upon both parties unless broken by actual infidelity is distasteful. It is suggested that the bond of union should depend on nothing more substantial than the wish of the parties concerned. There is scant consideration given to the responsibilities that may accrue from marriage. The duty of each parent towards the children is thrust into the background. The possible consequences to the State should these obligations be ignored are treated as of no account. Other matters seem to be more important to men and women alike. The individual must be free to gratify the passions with the least possible inconvenience. Any painful consequences which in the present condition of society follow upon wrong-doing must be made impossible. Nature and law must acknowledge the rule of human egoism. What will be the result of applying such principles throughout society during a lengthened

period? Gradually, of course, they will pass from the higher to the lower strata of society. Mayfair will be copied by Houndsditch. The poor are always more logical than the rich. They will probably carry their principles to their final issue. If this is done, the bonds which unite the elements of society will be dissolved.

Women will become accustomed to the idea of having two or more husbands. They will be indifferent as to the father of their children. Having no guarantee of his continual care, they will prepare against the day of dismissal or desertion. Hence they will develop the ideas and sentiments of the courtesan while remaining members of an alleged virtuous society.

Again, let us suppose that men and women are systematic in their thinking. Let them draw logical conclusions about their conduct. How will these affect the children? Presumably the children will be no longer brought up by their parents. They will be uncertain in many cases who their parents are. They must be robbed of the fine influences which are associated even with the crudest form of parental affection. They will be subjected to the cruel mercies of a State official. Or they may be transferred to a foster-parent to be reared under the chilling régime produced by the performance of a hireling's duty. They will be the victims of the antipathy so often felt for the offspring of another woman.

Not one of these possibilities is absurd. Each of them is thinkable. They are frequently discussed. But are they treated by the writers of our time in a manner worthy of the interests at stake? One might imagine that they were no more important than the pruning of plum trees.

The Christian man is not bound to the sacramental idea of marriage. He does not regard divorce as of necessity a sin. He can stand by the side of those who are working for the betterment of the marriage laws.

Who would wish to make divorce impossible where the woman has no other means of escape from the cruelty of an unclean human brute? What valid argument can be urged against the refusal of a woman to become the mother of children who must acknowledge a drunken sot as their father? And what right have we to hold a woman bound by her vows to a man who has deserted her? Every effort made to relieve the woman from these asperities of the law will have the Christian man's heartiest commendation.

Nor will his attitude towards the political enfranchisement of women be one of chill discouragement. He will see in the demand for political freedom the awakening of woman's spiritual consciousness. And this seems to be one of the important items in the programme of Jesus. His common sense will save him all absurd talk about a sex war. He will know that there can never be entire similarity between men and women. But whatever will help woman to attain to higher levels of thought will have his unqualified approval.

The life of Jesus cannot be separated from the influences proceeding from good women. The pure relations existing between Him and the women of His time have left their ineffaceable mark on our thought about woman's position. The Gospels begin with the declaration, so worthily reaffirmed in our great Te Deum, that He did not despise the Virgin's womb. It is Anna, an aged woman, who prophesies in the temple concerning His future greatness. The picture of the woman who was a sinner, who washed His feet with her tears, is printed on the memory of mankind. In defence of a woman He dared the man who was without sin to cast the first stone. The generous heart has been moved in every succeeding age by the figure of the poor widow casting her mite into the treasury. To the women who gathered weeping at the Cross He speaks the words, "Weep not for

me, O daughters of Jerusalem." Gentle hands of loving women prepared His body for the tomb. And to the passionate heart of Mary on that first morning of the new era there came the revelation of the Risen Lord. In life and death women were near to Him. By Jacob's well He spoke of the deep things of God to a despised woman of the Samaritans. Always He treated them as the natural equals of men. He scorned the senseless notion that their physical disabilities entailed mental limitations. Against the theory which would make her no more than a fecund animal, He asserted her possession of an independent spiritual being. Glorious as is her privilege of motherhood, He would have repudiated the suggestion that in this she was to be no more than an irresponsible agent. For Him she was herself a person. Her political and social rights originate in her personal value. Her dignity does not depend upon the possession of property. It is not concerned with her usefulness to the State as the prospective mother of citizens. She does not find it in the situation of daughter or sister, of wife or mother. In her own right as a woman, apart from all possible relations with men, independent of all family considerations, she is entitled to the privileges, she must accept the obligations, and bear the responsibilities of individual human life. Jesus knew, what so many of our clever modern men forgot, that a man cannot live for a woman except in metaphor, cannot think for her unless by crippling her own mental life, and cannot die for her except as an expression of his own belief in her worth and devotion to her welfare. She is a human being as he is. She must endure the pains of life as he does. Some theory of life's meaning she must find, even as must the men of her generation. And at the last she must embark upon the unplumbed waters of death, as he does, alone. With what indignant contempt He would have greeted the doctrine that because she bears children

she cannot understand politics. What would He have said of the belief that a drunken Jehu is a citizen, but that the mother of children is an unintelligent instrument? What then has Jesus done for women? He has taught her to believe in her own soul. We would make of her a creature of wild impulses. To us she has been the mere victim of that nature which knows no morals, understands no sentiments, is deaf to all entreaties from reason or affection. Out of that kingdom of the living, in which we are but animated mechanisms, He has lifted her, to place her, where He has placed man, in the kingdom of the spirit, where nature is subordinate to soul.

Of course, we must distinguish between the teaching of Jesus and the teaching of the Church. Great ideas always lose something of their grandeur when they are brought into the world of affairs. The dust and slime of the highway clings to them. They soil with handling by those whose fingers are not too clean. And the Church has compromised here as elsewhere. Through yielding to the compulsion of the world she has gained in respectability and lost in power. On this question of woman's position, the Church has allowed the world to dictate her policy, when she ought to have regulated the policy of the world. Many men are not anxious to see the ideas of Jesus about woman made the common property of the new generation. They might make it more difficult to fill the brothels of the world. Rich roués with rotten bodies and consumptive souls have no desire to see their victims claim the rights of persons. Parliamentary pragmatists will shrink from the acceptance of ideas whose effect might be to increase the number of their intelligent critics. Genial capitalists who want shirts made for ninepence a dozen will not listen gladly to talk about the dignity of woman. So long as their own daughters are safe, their withers are unwrung. And it is this dead weight of corrupt humanity, this multitude of fat-hearted

and blear-eyed believers in religious respectability, that the Christian Church has been compelled to carry through the centuries. But even into this opaque mass of hungry egoism there is coming the breath of a new and sweeter life. Dull and inert as the Church militant has often proved itself to be, the pulse of a fresh vitality is beating in its veins. And, with all her otiose stupidity, the Church will be the first to give woman the rights won for her by Jesus.

What are the causes of this rebellion against the restraints of Christian marriage? It originates partly in a new outburst of human egoism. This has been fostered by the literature of the day. That literature is at once a cause and an effect. It is the product of passion. It is an incitement to revolt. Its writers have fanned the anger felt by women at the limitations on their freedom implied in the marital relation. The dramatists of the period, in particular, have some responsibility for this alleged warfare of the sexes. The active force behind their dramatic situations is the woman who has determined, at any cost to others, to develop her personal life. Their works are branches from the tree of Ibsen's genius.

It cannot be dissembled that an essentially vulgar motive frequently animates these fair creatures of the poet's fancy. Thus, to take a typical instance from Ibsen's work, Hedda Gabler is an irritable and neurotic young woman. She has married a man whom she does not love. It seems the one way of escape offered to her. But she will not behave honourably to the man she has deceived. Disgusted with his peculiarities, she endeavours to escape him by flirting with a villain. Realising that she must now be this man's slave or the petulant companion of her lawful husband, she sees no way out save by the pistol bullet. Now, what is there in this character that can elicit the commendation of a just man? We pity Cor-

delia; we feel some compassion for Imogen. But here is one who is no better than Goneril or Regan, save that she lacks the courage to complete the schemes born in those breasts of steel.

Apply Kant's criterion to this theory of life. We will do only that which every one else may do. It is easy to see that the theory will not work. Imagine what would be the result if all women took to developing their individuality, as the cant phrase goes, after the manner of Hedda Gabler or the heroine of *A Doll's House*! That it should ever be desirable is inconceivable. It would produce a race of frantic Mænads. Such women would quarrel with the universe because it interfered with their development.

The individualism of the modern dramatist needs to be differentiated from that spiritual independence which we find indicated by Jesus. Jesus uses the relations in which the soul lives for the enrichment of the spirit. Ibsen drags the individual out of all relations. Jesus views the individual as a unit in a society made up of similar units. Ibsen looks upon all human relations as an evil. The dramatist's heroic figure is that of one who believes himself to be strongest when he stands alone. The heroic Christian is one who trains himself in virtue through harmonious intimacy with his kind. His personality is developed for the benefit of man. His ego expands for the behoof of the race. When he prospers, it is not at their expense.

And in the higher culture of women this is important. As a protest against the tyranny of convention the dramatists have a case. But they have no constructive theory. Their ideas would destroy society, and finally slay the individual. We need Jesus to show us how to balance the claims of the soul and the rights of society. Not to deny, but to ennoble, to sanctify human relations, is the task of the emancipated woman.

Christian society has given to us examples where a selfish theory has been daringly acted upon. But whenever that has been the case, it has been because the rebel flouted the mandates of the religion he ought to have obeyed. Not until recent years have we had this public glorification of instincts which all moralists have agreed to restrain. It has remained for those who profess to be provided with a new light, superior to the poor lamp of Christianity, to show us how to make our crimes into virtues, and our favourite vices into a title to heaven. The rule of these purveyors of enlightenment is that passion shall have its perfect work. No venerable custom, hoary with the passage of the years and hallowed by the worship of unnumbered generations, shall stand for a moment in the way of your personal gratification. No scruple of attachment to the old, or sense of diffidence before the wisdom of the ages, shall prevent you from helping to shatter it.

For we are favoured now with the words of prophets, who are the children of Thespis rather than of Isaiah. It would appear from their teaching that the only thing to do with every moral commandment and healthy social custom, is to confront it with a flat denial, or attempt to turn it upside down. That the drama may on occasion be a powerful reforming instrument, Æschylus and Molière taught us long ago. But if the high pretensions of the dramatist of to-day are to be justified, he must cease from making female purity appear contemptible.

Consider the treatment of feminine morality by such a writer as Mr. Bernard Shaw. This writer sees that the trade of the procuress and the prostitute is tolerated in the State. Hence it appears to him foolish to visit its followers with any degree of moral reprobation. They are presumably driven to accept this life by the pressure of economic necessity. Therefore they merit no censure from those whose domestic peace is made possible by the

tolerance of this blot on civilisation. A more fallacious statement of the case can hardly be manufactured by the sophist. For the assertion that the ranks of the fallen sisters of men are recruited under economic pressure is only true in a very limited sense. Such a supposition ignores the other influences which may exercise control over a young mind. Against these the only protection is a vital religious sentiment.

The melancholy truth is that most women who enter upon this life are attracted by the allurements of wealth, not driven by the fear of starvation. They compare the luxurious life of their wealthy sisters with their own limited means of enjoyment. The continuous toil of a mechanical occupation is distasteful. They not unnaturally dislike the restraints of industrial life. They long for escape from a monotonous drudgery. Deceived by the glitter, stupefied by the incense which envelops the successful courtesan, having within themselves no saving principle of duty, they take the easier path. Is it wonderful that they should fall victims to the strongest temptation which can assail the purity of human life ?

Add to these things the lies of the seducer. Consider the cruelty which disguises itself under the name of gallantry. Look at the brutality with which men pursue pleasure at whatever cost in tears and grief to women. Reckon up these agencies, and the causes of this festering sore of the social body are not far to seek.

There is one mistake made by these moralists of our time. They are continually preaching that the force which drives these women into sin is found in their circumstances. It may be that the older moralists have exaggerated the influence of personal will. They may have thought too much of the power of an inner experience in the shaping of life. But if they have so erred, it was a noble error. For it at least attributed to these creatures the characteristics of humanity. It assumed

that they were reasoning and willing beings. It did not insult them by suggesting that they were driven like sheep to the slaughter-house of their womanhood.

We have yet to see whether this method of treating the offender against a moral canon is an improvement. Suppose that we recognise her existence as an inevitable necessity. Will it help us to mitigate the ferocity of this instinct? Shall we be as successful as our predecessors in promoting a degree of moral purity? Tell the robber that he is in no respect different from the honest man. Does that hold out much hope of shaming him into a better mind? Let the cheat be welcomed in the salons of reputable persons as though there was no stain upon his character. Will it be productive of that elevation of the ethical standard which our reformers so earnestly desire?

For centuries, society has fought with this evil. No impartial student can deny the measure of success which has been achieved. Influenced by Christian teaching, it has compelled the lecherous person to be silent about his crimes. Contemplating with infinite compassion the sufferings of this wretched class of women, it has steadily maintained the dignity of matronly virtue, the beauty of chastity, and the possibility of purity for woman. It has refused to allow the existing sins of a class to be made the standard of an ideal virtue. If this system is to be thrown aside, at least we ought to consider the consequences before that step is taken.

How does the average maker of plays to-day regard the chastity of woman? That is a fair question. The man who thinks the answer is unimportant has no right to pose as a teacher of anything beyond the mental capacity of a hen. Jesus has made it the most sacred thing in the world. He has surrounded it with the strong walls of His authentic approval. He has made marriage into a holy covenant between man and maid, and has translated the idealising passion of the lover

into the glowing reverence of the saint. The love of man for woman and of woman for man has been lifted to the dignity of a hallowed mystery, the spring of the purest emotions of the heart. It is left to our modern playwrights to reduce it again to an incident of the stable and the sty.

For example, look at the treatment of feminine purity in Mr. Houghton's play, *Hindle Wakes*. This play will probably be seen by many thousands of young women. It will in due course provide its author with a handsome income. It ought also, if the dramatist's assertion about the extent of his influence is correct, to add considerably to the number of feminine social pariahs. Here is a girl who goes from home with the son of her employer, spends the night in a seaside hotel, and then returns to her parents. Confronted with the facts, the youth and girl have the same excuse to offer. They wanted a holiday, thought they would have a good time, and had it. Beyond that they recognise no person's right to interfere in the matter.

This is a sordid story. Its repetition is distasteful enough. But this is the gospel proclaimed by our noble reformers of the Drama, our teachers of the higher morality! This, forsooth, is what the maidens of our generation are expected to take in, as part of that "finishing process" which qualifies them for their rôle in the world. It is true that the women of a former generation might have thought seriously of it. They would have perceived that consequences usually follow from this trick of playing with fire. But the well-trained young woman of our time, under the tutelage of these apostles of light, will have learned to look upon the incident as the natural accompaniment of a holiday! Bah! what Samoedic savage, with the untamed blood of his wild ancestors boiling within him, could not teach decency to these schoolmasters of the stage!

Or, take another illustration of the manner in which the purity of woman is treated, from the works of Mr. Bernard Shaw. In his amusing comedy, *Fanny's First Play*, we may study the manner in which the dramatist views the safeguards with which sensible parents try to protect their daughters. We may put aside the ludicrous misrepresentation of the religious home in which the heroine has been reared. We can ignore the unnaturally dismal character of the girl's mother. For all these we are prepared, as the usual treatment meted out to religion on the stage. But what are the probable consequences of the course of conduct presumably recommended to the young women of our generation? Here is a young lady who, on her way to a religious gathering, changes her mind and strolls into a dancing-hall. There she meets with a young Frenchman, and spends one or two very lively hours. She becomes mixed up with a crowd of medical students who are rampaging around. Naturally she is included in the collection of prisoners secured by the police when they enter to stop the row. Of course, a good deal of this style of writing is simply harmless fooling. Doubtless in the atmosphere of airy persiflage, with which a clever man like Shaw is able to envelop the setting of his drama, the whole thing appears an excellent joke. The refined audience gathered to watch this entertainment will enjoy its sense of superiority to the vulgar humbug and solemn-faced matron who are the parents of this young lady. But how many of these gentlemen who laugh at Shaw's witticisms would be willing to allow their own daughter to spend half the night in the society of a gay young Frenchman of attractive manners, within pistol shot of Leicester Square? We all know the answer. Some of us are interested in the writings of our modern dramatists, not because they are clever and amusing, but because they are supposed to mean something. We

are chiefly anxious to find out what they mean, and what are the inferences to be drawn by an intelligent man from their meaning. There appears to be little reason for admiration of their ethical product. These teachings are not going to enrich the finer elements in feminine character.

The religion of Jesus has tried to teach women that the purity of the virgin and the nobility of matronhood are powers of the first order. It has created in the minds of men the conviction that these ought to be revered. If its professors have sometimes erred in the strictness with which they have guarded these finer gifts of womanhood, their error has not been without its element of grandeur. It is better that the regalia of the Crown should be kept behind protective barriers in the Tower, than that it should be rudely handled by every drunken tourist who lurches through that sanctuary of ancient glory. And it is not good, and all the sophistries of a witty man ought not to convince men that it is good, to break down the bridges and destroy the walls behind which the maidenhood of the Christian world has found some form of defence. The passions need no intoxicant. Nature herself will see that they are vigorous enough. And strong men ought not to be ashamed of having laboured to guard in soul and in body the virginity of their daughters, even though they are laughed at by the jester of the age and the witlings who applaud him.

It will be said that these are but trifles, the light foam flakes on the life of the age, having no significance for those who are interested in the real movement of thought. They may appear contemptible in the eyes of those for whom Christianity lives in a region where the cackling of the daily journal is not heard.

We regard this as a serious and stupid mistake. What is the use of writing defences of Christianity in a speech no more intelligible to the ordinary man than

Icelandic? Why do we ignore the mining process going on beneath our feet, and send our shells ricochetting into the vast inane? The writers of this school, who regard Ibsen as their master, have the bravery, and it is all needed, to take themselves seriously. They claim to be the spiritual censors and ethical teachers of their time. We must pay them the compliment of accepting them at their word. We must force them to unveil the inner meaning of their doctrine. It is not only what they say, it is the implications of their speech that must be considered. If they are public teachers they cease to belong to the crowd of irresponsible chatterers who claim the privilege of saying the first idiotic thing that comes into their heads. It is time that we challenged them to "Stand and deliver" the message with which they are burdened, in good, round English. Even such doddering persons as believers in the religion of Jesus may then hope to understand it. Then we shall know whether Woman stands to gain by the transfer of her allegiance from the welcome Guest in the house at Bethany, to the literary priests of the modern world.

And from the consequences of some of these new forms of teaching the women of our time will need a defence. The civilised man will not easily throw off the effects of centuries of Christian culture. But there will always be those who seek an intellectual apology for their own brutality. And such men will experience little difficulty in finding the advocacy they need in the current philosophy of the age. Let them reject the doctrine they imbibed from Jesus, that woman is also a person, and the spiritual equal of man. They can then adopt the popular thought of the day and comfort themselves with the belief that they are in the van of progress while they swear by the name of the new Zoroaster. They will accept with avidity the teaching of this new prophet. Thus they will learn to look upon their sisters

and their wives through the eyes of this inspired inhabitant of Bedlam. How gladly they will read the words with which Nietzsche sums up the relations between the sexes!

Thou goest to women? Don't forget thy whip. Listen to this, all ye honourable women. Twenty centuries of Christian teaching have brought you from the grade of chattel to that of man's elect and proud companion. Think of this when you dream of that felicity which you shall share with your heart's desire. Remember this in the presence of that guest of your holy dreams, who is to be your companion and friend as well as husband and protector. The gospel which is to supplant the ethics and precepts of the Nazarene is this, that a man shall not forget, in the presence of his heart's beloved, that he carries a whip. O wise and prudent generation, prepared to scoff at the Man who taught Mary the glory of life and to take to its bosom this evangel of the tiger's lair! You men, who are descendants of those who went to the wars with the badge of their lady on their helm and the print of her kiss upon their cheek! Listen to this new and better gospel. Don't forget thy whip. Is not this new lamps for old? Spurn from you these absurdities of a ridiculous chivalry. Learn to despise this banal devotion to haloed saints. Give to this madman the throne once occupied by Jesus.

F. W. Robertson is credited with the assertion that women and God are the two rocks on which man must either anchor or be wrecked. It is no mere rhetoric which thus connects these two agencies. No one can exaggerate the importance to all men of a high ideal of woman. If it were not of primary importance to men it would still be of first importance to women. For something like this is needed if they are to be saved from themselves. Let the fanatical doctrine of decadent thinkers be generally accepted by man. Women will

find it hard to resist the temptation to accept it in their turn. Surrendering the high privileges won for them under the ægis of Christian belief, they will acquiesce in a theory which would make them the amusing playthings of their intellectual superiors. Again they will become the worthy candidates for an Oriental harem, to be pampered or thrashed as the magnificent owner may decree.

Many of us have believed with Ibsen that "the women will solve the question of mankind, but that they will do so as mothers." Yet can we hope for that consummation if we go back upon the tracks of our culture? What is to produce it if we repudiate all that woman has won through the Christian dispensation? Is it by a denial of these gains, by the rejection of trophies so hardly won, that we shall reach our goal? Not so. It is by the deepening of our faith, by the further enlargement of the area of feminine freedom, that we must fulfil the dream of the dramatist.

Are we to tell the generation which has "compassed Seraglio Point, but has not yet rounded Cape Turk," that all the struggles of their predecessors to bring us into safe harbourage have been in vain?

Happily most of the good women of the world realise the truth. They know that in religion, in its prohibitions and its sanctions, lies the only hope of lasting improvement in the condition of themselves and their daughters. When piety has been made a byword amongst men, it may retain a sanctuary in the breasts of good women. It is not to the fed and fêted darlings of an immoral leisure, the vampires who suck the blood of their victims and then laugh at them for their fond madness, that we look for the salvation of women. Not by these will our sisters be delivered from the trammels of luxurious concubinage and legalised prostitution. To the millions of hard-working and courageous women, in

our factories and warehouses, our shops and hospitals, we look for help in this conflict. To these honourable toilers, labouring by the side of man in the good cause of humanity, we shall turn for aid and cheer in our time of need.

And these women know that the most potent agency in the elevation of their sex to an equality with man, the fontal spring of that idealism which has made them feel a stain upon their chastity as though it were a wound, has been the influence Jesus has exercised over the soul of the modern world. Dethrone Him, and who is to occupy the seat of power? It will be left to those who come to woman, with gold and frankincense in one hand, and a bowstring in the other.

CHAPTER VI

JESUS AND THE CHURCH OF THE PEOPLE

IT seems possible that religion may again be made fashionable. Some influential persons have come to her aid in the hour of distress. To any one who is interested in Christianity the most lamentable feature of our modern life has not been the growth of agnosticism and the strengthening of the sceptical spirit. Worse than this is the eagerness with which believers have turned to any one who would speak a word in favour of the faith of twenty centuries. From various quarters we have heard of the breakdown of science as an expositor of human life. Brunetière's onslaught was only one expression of a conviction growing up in the minds of men. The cocksureness with which life's problems have been treated is no more satisfactory than the blind faith of a former dispensation.

Now we have found that, far from having finally settled the questions in dispute, each one of them is as open as ever. The new generation begins again to debate the eternal themes with as much zest and freshness as though they had never received the attention of the savants of Europe.

But the latest development in this game of seesaw is even more startling. For distinguished representatives of various schools of investigation assure us that there is still something to be said for the Christian religion.

This is all on the good side. It spells a future for

Christianity beyond what its enemies have granted. It is good that whenever providence grants to us philosophers like Eucken or Bergson, they should support that truth which we believe to be the central meaning of the world. But with all this there must go occasional misgivings and searching of the heart. For some of us cannot help seeing that the authority which establishes or even props up for a time, may also cast down and destroy. During a generation our countrymen were disposed, on the authority of Spencer and Huxley, to treat the Christian religion with an asperity only occasionally mitigated by a sense of its historic interest. Now, on the authority of another generation of men engaged in similar pursuits, we are expected to throw in our lot with the defenders of the faith. We must, at least, call ourselves by the name of Christian as the best way of escape from the modern muddle. The fact, of course, is that our teachers are alarmed at the size of the world and the complexity of its parts. The presence before their eyes of the infinitely small as well as the immeasurably vast, has at last produced its chastening effect on thinkers. The certitude with which they once laid down the law has changed to the murmurings of a modest youth, lisping sweet phrases about the deep blue ocean and the song of Philomel. There is nothing to be surprised at in this transformation. It has probably happened many times before and will frequently occur again. Surely it must afford amusement to the Eternal Wisdom. Does He smile at the mutabilities of His creatures? But it may suggest to us the question whether the method on which this system is based does not need investigation.

Assume that the difficulties of religion are to be settled by authority at all. Would it not be better for us to go back to the one objective and apparently changeless authority that the world can show? We say

changeless, although we all know well enough that the Papacy has changed whenever it felt that its continued life required such alteration. But the one authority which still claims to be the immutable arbiter on all such questions, is waiting for us to bring our disputes before its court. Can we deny that it is at least the most respectable of those bodies which claim to decide the litigations of religion? And that is the reduction of the whole matter to an absurdity. For it is not believable that the world will ever again put its neck beneath the yoke of the Vatican. It will not listen with bated breath for the utterance of Pope and Cardinals as the ultimate expression of God's will. One Canossa is enough.

If the Christian religion is to live in the future, its believers and defenders must liberate themselves from one delusion. They must declare that their belief does not depend upon the opinions of the different schools which have a temporary monopoly of authority. If this submission to academic authority is to be strictly carried through, it must result in a cancelling of one by the other. We are at last left with nothing but an indefinite idea that something can be said on both sides.

Where, then, is the seat of authority in religion? We answer that it is to be found in the Church. Which Church? The Church that is made up of the people, of all those who have, by many ways and in differing degrees, realised a relationship between themselves and the Church's Head, the Saviour of us all. That relation is not dependent for its maintenance upon any institution, or ceremony or intermediary person. It grants to the illiterate and the humble as much as to the learned and the noble, access to the sanctuary where God reveals Himself to the soul.

It will be said that this is too vague. What authority worth the name can there be in such a hetero-

geneous collection of individuals? That it is vague is indeed its chief recommendation. For it serves to include all those persons whose opinions differ on subordinate issues, but who are yet intimately related to our common Lord.

And the fact is, that throughout the history of the Christian Church there has been a practical unanimity on the basal truths of our religion. This agreement has defied all the efforts of the disingenuous historian to obliterate. The fixed truths of the religion have always been God and Man, with Christ crucified and risen as the link between the two extremes. Amidst all the divagations of theologians these stand out clear as the light from Eddystone on a stormy night. Had it been possible to delete utterly any one of them, it would have been done long ago by the efforts of one or other of the opposing parties. But whenever one has been obscured for a time amidst the dust of the conflict, there has followed a period in which it has shone with brighter lustre.

There is always the possibility that a religion intended to break down the boundary walls of caste should become parochial in its outlook and narrow in its appeal. We do an injury to the faith when we allow it to become the monopoly of any section of society. Its greatest interpreters have always recognised that God has made of one blood all the nations of the earth. They have known that in His creation there is nothing common or unclean of itself. Can we not get back that large outlook upon life? In Memling's picture of the Madonna there are two glimpses of landscape. In one of them you may see the castle of the baron frowning down upon the world from its lofty security. In the other you catch a sight of the peasants' huts, where the rude forefathers of the hamlet labour and live throughout their little day. That is the eternal message of Jesus to man-

kind. All the schemes of men do but leave the sharp divisions of the social order more cleanly cut than before. His word comes to remind us that pauper and prince are children of the one Father, for ever united in their common need of a Redemption. Any Church which forgets this labours under the curse of God. Whether its ministrations are to the healthy or the sick, to the endowed or the disinherited, in so far as it fails to show to men their solidarity it becomes a hindrance to mankind. Yet it should be the generator of the world's driving power. This is the only Catholicism about which wise men will trouble in the future. The Anglican and Roman may still keep alive the old feud about Succession. But the Catholicity whose centre is Jesus and whose circumference is humanity will in future possess the power of the Keys.

If, then, we are to seek for an authority to-day, it must be one in which Jesus, interpreted through the common mind of the Church, is Himself the final refuge and court of appeal. The mind of the democracy will not deny to scholarship its due. It will always be willing to hear the man with the facts, who understands the limitations of his own governmental sphere. But the time has come when the value of Christianity must be decided in other courts than those in which statesmen, ecclesiastics or savants, are accustomed to move. Its worth must be judged in the mind of the people. The masses of the modern world, now coming to self-consciousness, must decide its value. And these are realising, albeit but dimly, that Jesus of Nazareth holds the key to the meaning of their tragic earthly lot.

In the times which lie before the world, there will probably be much to shock the complacency with which Gibbon confronted the perils of the future. Our whole civilisation may again be thrown into the melting-pot. There may then be little apparent need for the organised

institutions connected with the name of Christ. But there will be felt throughout the civilised world a greater need for one who can speak with authority to men and can legislate for them in the august chambers of the soul. The form of Churches is happily a thing of little moment to the lover of his kind. But the Church itself, that Church which is in the world and yet not of it, will remain as the City of Refuge for the weary and disheartened children of men.

It was the discovery of this fact, the recognition that the people are to be the final arbiters in the elements of religion, which transformed the views of Tolstoy. It opened for him the pages of the New Testament. It enabled him to escape from the miserable fear that the end of life might be no more than a struggle of the last survivors on an Arctic floe. He learned that these men and women of the fields had already discovered that secret of life which Jesus had come to unfold. This is what the peasant painter of Barbizon has made clear to the world. Those wearers of sabots, the weary workers who, when the Angelus calls, lift themselves for a moment from the toils of earth to breathe the air of heaven, express the painter's conception of that response to the call of the Highest spontaneously made by all the genuine workers of the world. They are nearest to life as it is. They see more readily than the rest of us the validity of the words of Jesus. Their own souls authenticate that majestically lovely speech which was heard by Galilee.

Newman had the temerity to use the doctrine of Alcuin, that the voice of the people was the voice of God. In a high spiritual sense that doctrine must be reinterpreted and proclaimed again as the foundation of our Christian ecclesia. Where the people are gathered together, seeking for guidance in the great matters of life, contributing to the common stock of inspiration out

of their individual wealth, there is the true Church of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

In the light of this belief the work of the historian and the archæologist assumes a new importance. They have helped us to see how great a part the Church once played in the life of the people. The workers of the world in those times formed a bond of union in their devotion to Jesus. Soldiers and sailors, peasants and artisans, found in Him their spiritual Captain. In Lower Egypt and along the Mediterranean coast the gospel brought hope to a servile population. Its ministry was the herald of redemption to the poor. Alas that this, its chief glory, should ever have become dim!

Yet here it has but followed the common course of the world. From the Ptolemies to the Romanoffs it has been the same. Dynastic interests have bulked far too largely in the secular history of humanity. And on its sacred side the ecclesiastic and the theologian have monopolised far more attention than was always their due. The Church has suffered from the Mandarin disease. If the Church is to live, it must eradicate that virus from its vitals. Leaders we shall still need, and the true episcopi of the spirit will never find it difficult to win the allegiance of their flocks. But the day has come when the Church of Jesus must confess that its only justification for existence is found in its ministrations to the masses of mankind.

It is too true that there is nothing the patrons of the people dread so much as being identified with them. And probably the man who made that acute remark was not unconscious of the illustrations that the Church of Christ could offer him. But the truth is that we must all now either be identified with the people, or cease to have any identity at all. And what a glorious opportunity the world offers to us to-day, if we are willing to accept the implications of our beliefs!

Beneath the changing habits of mankind there can still be found a willingness to hear the call to sacrificial service. The masses of men are not resolutely irreligious. Their impatience of ecclesiasticism may be only a hunger for the advent of the true kingdom. And if we try to make the Church their home, they will not entirely refuse our invitation. Let us have the daring to follow Luther in his bold saying, "Whoever believes that he is saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus is my brother, and I care not about his doxy." We shall gain more in fraternal strength than we can ever lose through theological inexactitude.

Not otherwise shall we make Jesus the acknowledged monarch of men. We must bend our wills to the task of creating this Church of the people. We must build a temple in which they are at home, a sanctuary in which their truest manhood may find adequate expression. If the people are to be won for the Church, it must be by the Church rejecting everything which would hinder its free access to the hearts and hearths of the multitude.

And why should we be afraid? There is no institution known to men which even now has such power over mankind in the hours of mortal crisis as the Church of Jesus. Do we imagine that in these secular institutions, fashioned and formulated so swiftly by men of talent, the human race will finally be content to rest? The individual and the race alike cry out against the doctrine. It is a slander on the soul.

After all, what are these ideal commonwealths of the intellect but States founded on some form of oppression on the one hand and subjection on the other? What do they mean but that the clever people have risen to the top by using the labours of those less gifted? Doubtless the political thinker is right who maintains that this may be a beneficial process. Through it the subordinate masses of the world may be compelled to

receive what is good for them. Out of any human system the providential guidance of the world may extract some profit for mankind. But the society thus founded may be no nearer to the ideal State than a collection of reptiles, each of them struggling to exalt its fanged head above its competitors. The net result of it all may be the Italian city State, reproduced in larger form. The despot again lives in splendid isolation, with brilliant men and lovely women paying homage to him. And meanwhile misery lies festering in oubliette and dungeon beneath his palace floor. That is not an alluring prospect to those who may anticipate for themselves such subterranean entertainment. And yet until we have the guarantee that intellect will be religious, how shall we avoid it? Until the born rulers of men, if there are any such, have acknowledged the rulership of One higher still, there is little hope of escape from the keen cleavage between the owners and the disowned of the world. To one who is not yet like the fish of the Kentucky caverns, blind from long confinement in the dark, the dreams of a regenerated and happy world without religion are unmitigated nonsense.

There is a Spanish proverb which says, "If all cannot have a piazza, every one may see the sun." If that is not true of any community, then no claptrap about the march of civilisation can save a State from condemnation at the bar of a Christianised conscience. And who would say that we are even within hailing distance of that rudiment of justice? Our social students tell us of women who have spent forty years in the making of match-boxes. These poor victims have laboured until the movement of the hands has become automatic. Even in their few hours of release the tired fingers still involuntarily repeat the movements of the working day. At this day there are many millions of our fellow-citizens to whom the wide spaces of the sea and the bright beauty of the

mountains bring no message. For they have never had time to learn the appreciation of either. What, then, is the worth of our civic magnificence, what avails our national grandeur, if some ray of its glory cannot percolate down into these sunless homes of the poor? The Russian policeman takes the pillow from under the head of the aged woman who has no flag in her window, and sells it to buy bunting with which the Emperor may be greeted. This illustrates what drove John R. Green, struggling in his London curacy with the intolerable sorrows of the indigent, to say that he would rather see the flag of England trailed in the dust than add another sixpence to the taxes of the poor. It is against this and every other form of unnecessary privation that the disciples of Jesus must incessantly make war. And it can only be waged successfully by those who have learned to look upon men and think of them as they are regarded by Jesus Himself.

Let Aristotle argue that artisans are to be excluded from the ranks of the chosen, being debarred from excellence by their occupation. The silly doctrine, worthy of a Kindergarten, that the only true education is that which enables a man to translate Horace and Thucydides, has had too long an innings amongst men who ought to know better. The education of the skilled farm labourer, certainly that of the trained artisan in workshop and engine-room, is at least as well qualified to produce a man whose hands and brains are obedient to his will. Culture is something more than an ability to judge the value of an Elzevir, or appraise the worth of a piece of Wedgwood.

It is to this vast class of men, educated in the university of the world, as well as to the lover of our noble Humanities, that the disciples of Jesus must make their appeal. He at least trusted them. Never did He doubt that on the vital matters of human experience they are as

capable of judging as the most learned Pundit of us all. Mr. Dickinson has told us that the Athenian sailor turning the point of Sunium on his homeward journey, saw the spear of Athene on the Acropolis, and recognised in it the spiritual symbol of the State. May not our mariners, whose keels plough every sea, come again to recognise in the Cross above St. Paul's a nobler gospel? It should remind them of one who made a gibbet glorious. It might speak to them of a land whose every citizen enjoys some measure of the sun.

In the training of a body of men who have studied in the school of Jesus we are preparing for the future. Through companionship with their brethren, in this Church of the people, they will have become strong. Thus shall we raise a defensive wall for human rights against the encroachments of the immoralist. For there will always be those who believe that the ultimate test of right is the power of the strong arm. These men will repeat with their own variations those words of Sylla to the Roman citizens. The citizens would have reminded him that there was a judgment other than that which proceeded from the authority of the soldier. But his answer was, "Will you never have done citing laws and privileges to men who wear swords?"

Every rebel who finds himself in the seat of authority as the consequence of his daring and skill will fall back upon this kind of precept. Every insurgent soul who hates rulership by a society composed of men who believe in their rights, will attempt to make this the guiding principle of his conduct. Tell him that immemorial usage precludes him from appropriating what is not his own. He will answer you that he acknowledges not its prescription. Remind him that the land has belonged to the commune for generations and should not now be snatched from the possession of the corporate society. He will tell you that he lives in a region where the writ

of the corporate society does not run. Confront him with the title-deeds of a public right, from Magna Charta down to the parchments of a Parish School. Show the Testament by which a legacy is left for collective benefactions. With unblushing countenance he answers that he has the power to do what he likes, and proposes to exercise it. Tyranny does not always hide itself in the mansion and the palace. It may conceal itself in a lawyer's office, or find a comfortable housing in the Senate of a University.

And against this Protean figure, this creature of the depths, which is slain in one place to revive again in another, what adequate protection have we? None, unless we can raise up a body of men who have learned in the Church of the people, that Church of which Jesus is the head, that they have rights which neither force nor wealth may dare to trench upon.

Something of this has, indeed, begun to show itself in our laws. True, there is still far too much resemblance in the green glades and sombre woods of England to that which Mirabeau found in his own land, when game warders protected beasts as if they were men and hunted men as if they were beasts. Do we need illustrations of the depths of somnolent stupidity to which we have sunk? Look at the complaisant manner in which we allow the multitude to be gradually fenced off from access to the lovely land in which they have been born, while acres of it are made into preserves for pheasants and runs for foxes. Honest women are prevented from earning a living as poultry farmers, in order that gentlemen may have foxes to give them a good run for their money. These anachronisms are the pleasing memorials of what our grandfathers revered as feudal tenure. But we are learning. Slowly it has dawned upon us that a man is better than a sheep. The compassion born of the knowledge of Jesus has begun to infiltrate itself into our social system.

We have yet to see realised in all its beauty and power this ideal Church of the people. It lies concealed in the womb of the future. But it will surely be brought to birth. For men are learning even now that there is no defence for them save that which is found in the spiritual sanctions and prohibitions of religion. The day will come, says Du Guérin, when all these drudges of the world will stretch out towards Christ their black and callous hands and will say, "Lord, you who have said, Blessed are the poor and lowly, to you, good God, we make our last appeal."

When that day comes we shall again conquer Europe. And what a vista that reconquest of the seats and centres of civilisation opens before the mind! The millions of China are waking from their millennial torpor. The multitudes of Japanese are entering into the cosmopolitan life of the world. And this means that there will be exerted a pressure on the life of European communities such as has not been felt since the barbarians menaced the empire of Charlemagne.

And in those protracted conflicts which require generations for their completion, where one form of civilisation rolls up like a wave against another, it will not be only the quick-firing gun and the flying machine that will count. The factors of conquest must also include ideals of life. Those beliefs about human destiny, which have their own ascending and descending scale of values, may prove to be the decisive elements in the epoch-making conflicts of the world.

Only a Church which has won the allegiance of the people can provide these ideals. Here we must find the moral power to support the legions whose task it may be to defend the civilisation of Europe against a world in arms. Such a Church will offer to the new generations the hope of a continual approximation towards a condition in which the oppressions of the many by the few shall become for ever impossible. It was a contradiction

noted in the Princess Dashkof, that she had liberal ideas but continued to beat her peasants. That will become impossible amongst men who have learned in the Church of the lowly Jesus the value of the individual life.

That ghastly spectacle described by Chaumeix, when he saw the poor buried in the common sewer of St. Petersburg, can then never be repeated. It will be only one of those hateful memories which still haunt the memory of the lover of his kind. For the Church will have taught itself to know that she exists for the poor. The ignorant must always be her charge; not that their ignorance may be maintained, still less that it may be traded upon by those keen-witted rogues who have too often disgraced their high calling. They will be in her keeping, that she may dissipate their darkness by the irradiating presence of her Lord.

The Church of the future must have a wider door than hitherto it has known. In Ibsen's *Brand* there is found the germinating idea which has already begun to grow. It must go on with its fertilising work until it has awakened the soul of the race to a larger charity. He, too, learns that the Church needs enlargement, that the blood-stream of humanity must find an entrance within its doors. And we must learn the same lesson.

Then we may again show to men that there is no institution so effective as a protector of their temporal as well as spiritual liberties as that which gathers about the central figure of Jesus. We shall learn from all who are competent and willing to teach us. We shall appropriate the methods useful in every form of society. We shall discover means for the utilising of the immense variety of human talent. We shall once again make the spire as important as the factory chimney, and the altar will be as natural an accompaniment to life as the lamp-lit meal at our father's board.

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